

LETTERS

ON THE

English and French Nations;

CONTAINING

Curious and useful Observations on their
Constitutions natural and political;

Nervous and humorous Descriptions of the Virtues,
Vices, Ridicules and Foibles of the Inhabitants:

Critical Remarks on their Writers;

Together with Moral Reflections interspersed
throughout the Work.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By Mons. L'ABBE' LE BLANC. *k*

Quid verum atque decens, curo & rogo, & omnis in hoc sum.
Horat. l. i. ep. 1.

V O L. I.

Translated from the Original French,

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. BRINDLEY in *New-Bondstreet*; R. FRANKLIN
in *Russel-street, Covent-Garden*; C. DAVIS in *Holbourn*; and
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The English BOOKSELLER'S
ADVERTISEMENT
Concerning this
TRANSLATION.

THE title of the original French is extremely simple and modest, being only *Lettres d'un Francois*, or *Letters of a Frenchman*, without the least mention of the author's name, or any other intimation of the subject, than what is comprehended in the motto. The first of these deficiencies we have supplied by undoubted authority, and the second upon a strong presumption of affording satisfaction to the English reader.

THE author, Monsieur L'ABBE' LE BLANC, is a gentleman equally re-

commendable for learning, wisdom and probity, who, by invitation of a British nobleman of the first order, accompanied him into England in the year 1737, and remained full seven years among us. By this happy introduction he daily had the most favourable opportunities of conversing with persons in high life here; and his strong desire of knowing mankind led him to learn our language, and frequently to descend to the lower rank of people: and thus he seems every way qualified to be an observant spectator of our manners, customs, virtues and vices, from the peer to the peasant. How he has acquitted himself of his *spectatorial* task, is entirely submitted to the judgment of the public: all that we shall presume on this head is to wish, that whatever he says to the disadvantage of our country may prove to be the fruits of misinformation or prejudice. But what nation,
and

and more especially what opulent nation is perfectly wise and virtuous, without any mixture of vices and follies?

THAT M. LE BLANC is intimately acquainted with the most famous persons in France for philosophy and polite literature, the list of his correspondents is a convincing proof: and as a specimen of the advantageous opinion, which they entertain of him, we cannot resist the temptation of publishing the following letter, wrote to him in English by the celebrated M. DE VOLTAIRE, upon his perusal of these letters.

To M. LE BLANC.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I WAS at Versailles, when you
 “ did me the favour to send
 “ me your book. I received it at
 “ my return to Paris; and I should
 “ have come to your house, in order

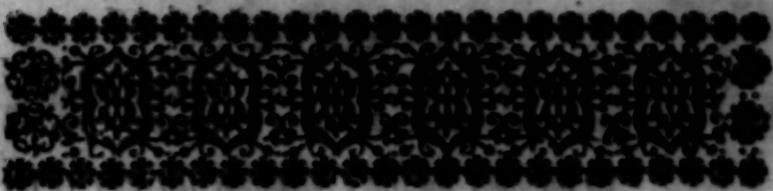
“ present you with my most hearty
 “ thanks, were I not debarr’d from
 “ this pleasure, and from all the du-
 “ ties of life, by the deplorable state
 “ of my crazy constitution.

“ THE reading of your LETTERS
 “ has asswaged for some time the
 “ continual tortures nature has doom-
 “ ed me to. Had I often such cor-
 “ dial, I would not complain any
 “ more of my ills. I support life
 “ when I suffer, I enjoy it when I
 “ read you. I wish you had tra-
 “ vell’d through all the world, and
 “ wrote on all nations. It becomes
 “ only a wise man to travel and to
 “ write: but our travellers, our wri-
 “ ters, and our readers are for the
 “ most part very far from being wise.
 “ I thank you again, and shall read
 “ you again.

“ *Your most humble Servant,*

Paris, Jan. 17, 1746.

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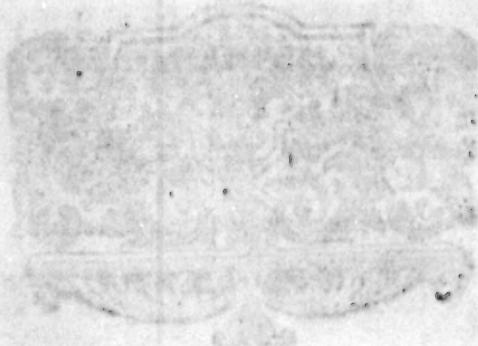
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LETTER



LETTERS

ON THE
English and French Nations.

LETTER I.

To the Marquis DE G***;

Containing some general observations on the natural and political constitution of England, and the temper and inclinations of the inhabitants.

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD,

THE study best becoming man is that of man himself, and ought to be the principal object of every sensible traveller. The manners and government of a foreign nation put us on our guard against our prejudices, and are the surest way to rectify our ideas and improve our knowledge. Such was the practice of the

ancient philosophers. The Greeks travelled into Egypt in search of wisdom's treasures; and there learnt new sciences, and brought new arts back with them. The Romans went to Greece to study policy requisite for government, and philosophy which makes men sensible of the connexion between virtue and happiness.

PARIS possesses in some respects the glory, which Athens and Rome have successively enjoyed: strangers flock thither from all parts; and how much it were to be wished for them and us, that the wisdom of our morals attracted them as much as the politeness of our behaviour! The metropolis of France sees in London a worthy and jealous rival, making continual efforts to dispute precedence. The English pass for the most rational nation in Europe. All that I have read, and all that you have said to me concerning England, excited my curiosity: I have followed your advice, and resolved to be personally acquainted with this people, which are in such high repute for wisdom, and think themselves superior to all others.

And indeed, how can one avoid forming the most advantageous notions of a nation, which appears to be at the same time warlike, trading and philosophical! 'Tis Rome, 'tis Carthage, 'tis Athens itself. If you credit the English, both the empire of the seas, and the right of holding the ballance of Europe equally belong to them; and in their pretensions

sions at least you find a proof of their power. Queen Elizabeth laid the foundations of their greatness: Cromwell finished the building; and it was by diminishing the liberty of the subject that he found means to render his nation so powerful. The English have been at different times the terror of their neighbours; and at present they are their masters in the branches of knowledge the most useful to society. Among this industrious people learning flourishes, arts are cultivated, and commerce entertains plenty in the different ranks and conditions of men.

What can procure these advantages to a country, which without being more fertile than those around it, is inhabited by richer men; a country which is in want of wood, and yet covers the seas with its ships; which produces few things absolutely necessary for its neighbours, and yet has such a flourishing trade with all the world!

Whatever the English may say, it is certain, that the situation of their island has as great a share therein as the nature of their government. The sea which surrounds them, by prescribing bounds to their conquests, compels them to take to commerce; which is the source of their power, as well as that of their liberty.

However let us not be imposed on by the panegyrics they make on their laws and policy; let us judge of them by the influence they have on their morals; and let us exa-

mine whether this people are really happier than their neighbours. This is the only way to know if they are more truly rational. Their form of government seems dictated by wisdom itself: but perhaps one needs no more than to read their history, or dwell among them, to be convinced that this government so boasted of, like PLATO's republic, is but an ideal project not reducible to practice. Let us suppose England to be in the same case with China, of which it is said, that there would not be a better governed country in the universe, if the integrity of the officers was answerable to the wisdom of the laws: let us allow the English, that the plan of their political constitution is, of all others known, the wisest in appearance; can they pretend that it is really so, if impossible to be put in execution? It has perhaps the greatest of all defects, that is, to suppose a degree of perfection in man, which human nature is not capable of.

What is properly stiled the People, is what most distinguishes the English from their neighbours; the share they have in the government by their right to choose their representatives, inspires them with a certain courage, which is not to be found in other countries in those of the same rank: but that which in a higher degree of life gives noble and elevated sentiments, among the lower people produces but haughtiness and insolence. The courage of those of this class contributes

contributes more towards disturbing the good order of society, than shewing their love for the laws, to which they owe their privileges.

'Tis not in the government alone, but likewise in the nature of the country inhabited by the English, that we are to seek the reasons of the every-way remarkable differences between them and their neighbours: the same cause which changes the taste of fruits according to the soil they grow in, produces this variety of humours and inclinations in men according to the quality of the air they breathe. Even as vegetables, so do we partake of the nature of the climate we live in. Let us take an example from among ourselves, and observe the effects of the sun on our different provinces. The inhabitants of those where orange-trees thrive, and those of that rich country abounding with apple-trees, have a great affinity of characters with their neighbours: in the Normans you find the good sense of the English; and the genius of a Provencal is pretty nearly of the same stamp with that of the Italians.

'Tis to the fogs, with which their island is generally overspread, that the English are indebted for the richness of their soil, and the melancholic disposition of their constitutions. This sad disposition of their minds is perhaps the cause, which makes them so violent in their passions: they eagerly pursue the object which diverts them from it: and thus they exhaust themselves, and not only become

early insensible to the pleasures of life, but unable to bear misfortunes of ever so short duration. Their dejected souls have not fortitude enough to suffer. If some courage is requisite for Suicide, more still is necessary for supporting grief. This same tendency to melancholy prevents their ever being content with their fate, and equally renders them enemies to tranquillity and friends to liberty. Thus in the very nature of the air they breath, we find the primary source of their inconstancy, and consequently the most powerful obstacle to the perfect establishment of their government; the harmony of which will always be disturbed by their restless temper.

These, my lord, are the different subjects, on which I will sometimes entertain those, who have sufficient confidence in me, to believe me capable of giving them an account of what passes under my eye. Reading, events, literature, manners, every thing in a word will afford matter for my observations. Whenever I happen to be mistaken, who can rectify my notions better than your lordship? You have happily improved nature's most valuable gift, I mean that philosophical turn of mind, which sets a true value on all things. You know mankind in general, and the English in particular, the different politics of governments, and the physical and moral causes thereof. If I have not all these advantages, I dare assure you at least, that nothing

thing shall make me deviate from truth, but the misfortune of not well discerning it.

I have the honour to be,

My lord,

Your lordship's most humble, &c.



LETTER II.

To the Marquis DE G***;

On the prejudices of mankind in favour of their native country, and the excess of them in the English; with some censures on the French.

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD,

THe love of our country, which nature has ingrafted on every heart, is one of the most useful virtues to the support of the community: but it is with this as with many others; our vanity may blend some vicious tincture with it, that may alter its purity. Nothing is proof against the taint of self-love. Prejudices sometimes render this attachment to one's native soil ridiculous in particular instances, which is so commendable in general.

It is more difficult than is imagined to get rid of those national prejudices, which injure our reason, and hinder us from putting ourselves in a true point of light to form a right judgment of objects not familiar to us: whatever other precautions are taken, they are seen only through a glass, that either magnifies or diminishes them, and frequently gives them wrong colours. The power of habit hurries us away, and makes us condemn manners which have no other defect but that of not being our's. Accustom'd to the hat, the turban shocks us: simplicity passes for rudeness with those who do not reflect, how much of the arbitrary enters into what is called politeness; we laugh at that of the Chinese, without considering that they have the same right to laugh at our's. And indeed, when a person loves his country, and, what is still more ridiculous, sometimes without loving it, he is unjust with regard to others. Whatever reproaches we may possibly deserve in this respect, you know we have one obligation to the English, that is, for not having left us in possession of the ridiculousness of being the most prevented in favour of our nation. Few men are truly philosophers, that is, reasonable: few men have like you that sound understanding, which corrects the errors of education, suffers itself not to be imposed on by the authority of the multitude; and knows on all occasions to discern where virtue ends and vice begins.

However

However good opinion one entertains of the English, he is still surprized at the excess of their prejudices: far from confining them to things which are peculiar to them, they extend them without bounds: they would be thought to excell all mankind in all things. In vain have their most celebrated writers piqued themselves of impartiality: the greatest part have had the same thoughts of their country with the common people, who are not acquainted with any other. According to them, the finest countries of Asia are neglected by nature in comparison of their own. True it is, that their island is pleasant and fertile; they procure by their industry such things as the soil denies them; which does them more honour, than if they were the productions of their climate: and nothing could be justly said against them, were it not for the exorbitant encomiums they bestow on it upon all occasions. Mr. PRIOR has found means to make Solomon sing the praises of England. The only difference between the language of their authors and that of the common people, is, that the former are more modest in their expressions: in certain respects they do not despise us as much as the generality of the nation; but yet they plainly intimate that there is a vast distance between them and us. To take their words, all the efforts of the wit of man cannot imagine a wiser form of government than theirs; the English are the most industrious, brave and virtuous

virtuous people of the whole earth; and the only one that has placed the treasure of liberty above the reach of destiny, both for the honour of human nature in general, and for their own in particular. Why is it not true that this encomium is their due! They equally affect to admire the works of their compatriots, and to despise the best modern productions of authors of other nations. TASSO is not to be compared with MILTON, CORNEILLE with SHAKESPEARE, nor LEIBNITZ or DES CARTES with the great NEWTON.

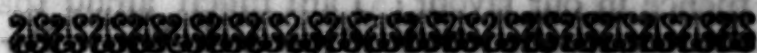
It must be allowed, that the zeal of this nation for liberty ought to make it respected by all those, who have the least notion of the dignity of our nature; that its love of sciences ought to command the esteem of those, who are in a capacity of distinguishing the merit they suppose, and the utility that results from them: the English are humane, brave, dexterous, laborious, &c. Their great fault lies in believing that they alone possess these virtues: with all those peculiar to them, some few others would effectually make them, what they think they are, the principal people of the earth. We must grant to their glory, that an Englishman generally speaks no less modestly of himself than advantageously of his country. I am sorry the same thing cannot well be said of us. A Frenchman seems to esteem his nation only with respect to himself: an Englishman appears not to set any value

value on himself, but with respect to his nation: which gives an air of vanity to the one, and to the other an air of greatness.

I have the honour to be,

My lord,

Your lordship's most humble, &c.



LETTER III.

To Monsieur DE BUFFONS,

Superintendant of the king's botanic garden, and member of the Royal Academy of sciences at Paris:

On the same prejudices, and the contrary folly of the French in affecting to mimick foreign manners and customs, in contempt of their own.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

THose who have no other knowledge of the English but from the portraits they themselves make of their manners and character, cannot possibly form very exact notions of them. On the contrary, we have more authors than one, on whom a person may rely for what concerns us, and who censure our defects and ridicules as severely as strangers who are the most offended at them. ADDISON has followed the custom of painters, by flattering

tering his nation in the portraits he has drawn of them. LA BRUYERE, if I am not mistaken, is more faithful in his characters: he has painted our nation just as it is. Several of our writers have imitated his sincerity. In general a confession of the defects, with which our neighbours reproach us, costs us very little: yet let us draw no consequence from thence in our favour; I am much afraid that this is only the effect of our prejudices. Perhaps it is barely for want of duly weighing them, that we so easily confess them: and how many are there, of which we are ridiculous enough to boast!

In France we think too well and too ill of the English: they are neither such as they represent themselves, nor as we suppose them: they are men like others, who have reason, but do not always follow its dictates. In their outward appearance they have somewhat rough, which prejudiced people take for ferocity: but if the envelop that covers their virtues is vicious, it does not change their nature. Notwithstanding this apparent roughness, no people have more humanity; of which they give proofs to their very enemies. Nothing so easy as to gain their good graces: every Englishman is his friend, who acknowledges the superiority of the nation. If they were satisfied with sounding its praises in their writings, they would do no more than is done every where else. Our people of Lower Britany believe that their language derives its origin

gin from the tower of Babel. A certain Swedish author pretends, that 'tis to Sweden, not to Egypt, that we owe the first discoveries in sciences, and inventions in arts. Every man extolls his country; and the love of our country is the effect of self-love. It is ourselves that we extoll, though we may not be sensible of it.

The English, not content with the preference they give themselves over their neighbours, do not even take the pains to disguise their contempt for some of them, and their hatred of others. They do not spare their friends the Dutch more than the French, whom they esteem their enemies. Their works of all kinds equally declare the little regard they have for other nations, and the good opinion they have of their own. Those of them, who have lived longest among us, and who are best acquainted with our authors, are frequently the very persons who render us the least justice.

Among us, where examples are to be found of all sorts of ridicule, this excess and its opposite are equally run into. Several of us, Frenchmen at London, Englishmen at Paris, foreigners every-where, after having scandalized our neighbours by the extravagant airs of our Petits-maitres, soon make their countrymen laugh by the affectation of whatever foreign behaviour has the most contrary to ours. How many are there, who seem to have reaped no other fruit from their travels, but the contempt

contempt of their native country? In their opinion there are no reasonable men, no wise laws, no encouragement for arts, but in the countries whence they are return'd: they are not satisfied with bestowing on foreigners such qualities as they have not; they even refuse their countrymen those, which strangers allow them. To hear them speak, it should seem as if justice and humanity were virtues absolutely unknown in France.

This excess is still more to be condemned than that of the English: if there is a meanness of soul in deriving vanity from being of this or that nation, or blushing for being born in England or France, Italy or Spain; it must proceed from some vice lurking in the heart. The love of our country should not hinder us from owning its defects: but still we are less blameable for over-esteeming our country, than for over-despising it. It is with the love of one's country as with paternal love. The blind tenderness of a father for his children may render him ridiculous: his severity towards them infallibly excites our indignation. Contempt for one's country shews more vanity than reason, and proceeds more from a peevish humour than a philosophic mind. Virtue forms the citizen of the world, but 'tis vice alone that can make a man appear a stranger in his native country.

In regard to the English, on whom I intend often to entertain you, several of us praise them without loving them, and the
greatest

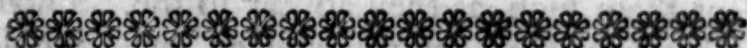
greatest part love or hate them without knowing them; some in order to follow the fashion, others by giving ear to nothing but their prejudices. It is true, that since it is fashionable at present to take them for our models, it were to be wished that their merits and demerits were exposed to us with less partiality. For what nation is there, wherein there are not things commendable and blameable to be found? By this means their example would be of greater service to us. Happy, if we shewed as much ardour to imitate their peculiar virtues, as inclination to adopt their particular vices. For my part, I do not pretend to pass judgment on them, but barely represent them such as they appear to me. Those judgments that are pronounced on a whole nation, are seldom just, and generally rash. Moreover there is not perhaps a people in Europe, of whom it is more difficult to give a general idea, than of those among whom I live at this day. The English are as different from one another, as their nation is from other nations.

You will doubtless find me in contradiction with myself, by having already made use of this general way of characteristics which I condemn; and 'tis probable that I shall employ it on every occasion more than I would choose: but I beseech you not to take it in a literal sense. The reason that I indulge myself in it, is that whatever care we take to avoid this manner of expression; as it is
the

the easiest, we always relapse into it. A repetition of the same circumlocutions proves at length disagreeable. We endeavour to be concise, and it frequently happens without design, that we say more than we intend; and give a decisive air to what is but the exposition of our opinion. Thus, sir, however decisive the terms I use may appear, be sure constantly to remember that I never intend to decide. And indeed what single man can dare to summon a whole nation to his own tribunal?

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



LETTER IV.

To the Chevalier DE B * * ;

On the ridiculous custom of the English in dressing-like their servants and other inferiors; with a description of the French Petit-maitre and English Coxcomb.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

IT is a happiness, when a person lives in the world as you do, and where you cannot avoid pleasing, to carry that sort of mind into it, which adopts nothing but by choice, which

which contracts a habit of the politeness without taking up the ridicules thereof, and which the contagion of the most reputable examples cannot corrupt. 'Tis commonly for want of other talents to make them be taken notice of, that the greatest part of mankind assume those airs and affectations, which you condemn, and which are so shocking to good sense. However do not think the English wiser than us: their ridicules are different, but men are every where the same.

You know the near relation of little things to great. He who would know a nation, ought to observe every thing: the manner of dress of different people depends, more perhaps than one may imagine, on their way of thinking. The Eastern people, who have for so long a time preserved the same manners, have likewise for several ages worn pretty much the same turban. And does it not appear almost to a demonstration, that we Frenchmen, who change our fashions so frequently, are the people of the greatest levity and inconstancy in Europe?

After this declaration, you will not suspect me of partiality for my country: but at the same time I will venture to tell you, that, with regard to the inconstancy of fashions, those neighbours of ours, among whom I live at present, might well deserve some censure: and if they have escaped it hitherto, 'tis purely perhaps because they are not sufficiently known. For several centuries past strangers

have frequented Paris, in order to study our manners: but 'tis not long since their curiosity called them to London; and besides, what do they come hither to see? The town, not the inhabitants: they arrive without knowing the language, and their stay is too short to learn it. Thus tho' they have acquired a competent knowledge of the capital city of England, yet they remain extremely ignorant of the manners of the people.

For example, is it not astonishing, that in a nation which prides itself in its good sense, fashion has been able to introduce so unreasonable a custom, as that which prevails at present among persons of the highest rank? At Paris the Valets de Chambre, and Ladies-women are frequently the apes of their masters and mistresses in dress. At London 'tis just the reverse: masters dress like their valets, and dutchesses copy after their chamber-maids. That the merchant affects to dress like a gentleman of the long robe, and a farmer of the customs like a courtier, is at Paris but a necessary consequence of the predominant luxury, and of the silly vanity so natural to all men: but that persons of distinction should take pride in dressing like their domestics, is a whim that borders upon irrationality. However there is no doubt, but it is from a principle of another sort of vanity that many of the English affect to appear so modest in their dress. Is not pride the latent principle of most of our actions, and sometimes even of our humility?

Some

Some of them indeed conform to this custom, purely in order to appear the more popular : but these may be reproach'd at least for not choosing better means to please the people. As for the women, 'tis very probable, that that some of them indulge this custom from a motive of refinement upon coquetry ; and that the self-love of others will not suffer them to doubt of their being in danger of losing aught by their neglect of ornaments.

This affectation of plainness in dress is supported in London by those, who think they have a right to give authority even to indecency. To despise pomp, and prefer conveniency to ornaments, is to have philosophy : but not to conform to established custom, and to affect to make a different appearance from rational people of the same rank, is a sign of wanting it. As to dress, is it not ridiculous in a peer of the realm to appear cast in the same mould with a brewer ; and does the same sort of apron, which orange-wenchs wear in the play-houses, sit well on a court-lady ? I own that people of good sense professedly despise those who follow so extravagant a custom : and indeed there is great room to fear, that persons, who deviate so far from their own condition, have imbibed the manners of those, whom they make it their glory to resemble. If this affectation gives no suspicion of their baseness of soul, it is generally a proof a little mind.

How whimsical so ever this mode may appear to you, it is nevertheless regularly observed here by a sort of *Petits-maitres* very different from those of Paris, but neither less remarkable, nor less ridiculous. The true English *Petit-maitre* is not he who copies after ours, but on the contrary he who makes a shew of behaviour diametrically opposite to that of the French. Exquisite cloaths, a singular equipage, jewels of all sorts, perfumes, patches, an affected tone of voice, little wit, much prattle, and a head void of sense; are pretty nearly the necessary qualifications of a French *Petit-maitre*. A short bob wig without powder, a handkerchief round the neck instead of a cravat, a sailor's waistcoat, a strong knotty stick, a rough tone and language, an affectation of the airs and an imitation of the manners of the meanest populace; these are the characteristics of the English *Petit-maitre*. And even such abuses partake of the general way of thinking of a nation. In China, where the sciences are in esteem, the smart young fellows always carry books under their arms, and an inkhorn hung round the neck. In a word, nothing has a nearer resemblance to our pedants than the Chinese *Petits-maitres*. Complaint has been made that the conversation of ours is but a string of pretty trifles; and that, unless the discourse runs on modes and snuff-boxes, plays and opera's, they have not a word to say. That of the English *Petits-maitres* is not more extensive, but it is of a quite different

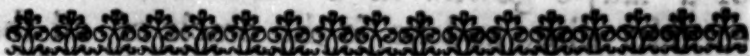
rent nature. Hunting and other bodily exercises, taverns and the most exorbitant debauches are the subjects of it. A French Petit-maitre is constantly employ'd in bawbles: he ridicules every thing that is serious, and is extremely serious on all mere trifles. He insists on presiding over fashions: sometimes he communicates new ideas to a ribbon-weaver, at other times he adds some graces to the facings of a lady's gown: in a word DU CHAPT consults him, and he is the oracle of all the milliners and toyshops of the Palais. The taste of the English Petit-maitre is very different: he values himself more upon his rudeness than civility: the public diversions, that are calculated for the dregs of the people, are the only ones, in which he finds any amusement: he takes delight in mixing with chairmen, excells in boxing with them; and has the most exalted notions of this noble exercise.

After having laid before you the ridicules of the one and the other, I ask you, sir, whether the powder à la Marechale of the Petits-maitres of Paris is not preferable to the dirty bob-wigs and heads of hair of those of London. A Frenchman, as here described, in the mouth of an Englishman is a MONKEY. Then who can admire, if the creature I have put in contrast with him, passes with us for a BEAR. 'Tis certain at least that human nature is equally degraded in both. What matters it, whether a man resolves to resemble

a monkey or a bear? From the moment he blushes to be a man, let us not hesitate to disclaim him in our turn. Whether Englishmen or Frenchmen, let us have no indulgence for the vices of our country; and let us not acknowledge for our country-men, or even for men, but those who make use of their reason.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



LETTER V.

To Monsieur DE BUFFONS;

On politeness to strangers, and national animosities: with a recommendation of humanity.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

WE hold politeness to strangers to be one of the virtues of our nation; yet 'tis one of those which the English dispute the most with us: you know it by those with whom you have lived: as much as they extolled the earnest desire you shewed to make their residence at Dijon agreeable to them, and the pleasures you procured for them at Mont-Bard; so much have they complained of the cold reception they met with elsewhere. They have often told you, that a Frenchman is much better received at London, than an Englishman

man at Paris : and I believe they told you the truth. But, if I mistake not, this proceeds less from the more or less estimable qualities of the people of the two nations, than from those of the countries themselves, which have not the same reciprocal allurements for their neighbours. Such as go abroad purely for amusement, seldom come into England. The prejudice runs against the climate, and London does not promise them pleasure enough to tempt them. The countries to which travellers seldomest go, are commonly those where hospitality is best kept up. Might not this be the reason of the great civilities shewn to strangers in London ? Few are seen there. If they are well-come to us, here they are sought after ? As it is not supposed that pleasure brought them hither, the people make it one, agreeably to deceive their expectations. Their curiosity is regarded as the effect of their esteem for the nation ; and pains are taken to justify it. Many study to invent such amusements as may obliterate the memory of those, which the climate refuses. They know that strangers generally come hither to see men, and each particular person does his endeavours to give the most advantageous notions of the whole body. In France this laudable emulation is not so common. If some houses in Paris are open to strangers, how many are there, where their presence is dreaded ? Our behaviour towards them does not always come up to the fine speeches so familiar to us. Few take

the trouble to do them the honours of the nation : each particular person is satisfied with giving them a good opinion of himself ; and in this they do not all succeed.

However, in regard to the English, you will easily imagine, that the question here regards only that select number of men, who in all nations are made to represent them, because they are possessed of all their virtues without any mixture of their defects : for you are not ignorant, to what degree the common people of London are rough, ill-bred, and especially enemies to the French. The great civilities done by the well-bred people, are perhaps heightened by a desire to atone for the insults the populace are always ready to offer us, and which our very dress will sometimes occasion. The common people of Paris, without supposing them more civil, are of a milder temper at least : nay the very reproaches that are thrown on them, bespeak the goodness of the character peculiar to them.

Moreover, here as every where else, some of the vulgar are to be found in every rank and condition of life. * What distinguishes men in the eye of reason, is their manner of thinking, not their rank. A grandee has frequently the prejudices of the meanest mechanic. There are some here, who cannot bear the

* *Vulgus autem tam chlamydatos quam coronatos voco : non enim colorem vestium quibus prætexta corpora sunt aspicio, oculis de homine non credo.* SENECA.

the sight of a Frenchman with tranquillity. The English are vehement in all their passions. The antipathy to our manners is so strong in some of them, that a father has been known to disinherit his son for wearing a bag-wig. What weakness, what madness are not men capable of!

The bulk of the English nation bear an inveterate hatred to the French, which they do not always take the pains to conceal from us: I am sorry, for the honour of ours, I am obliged to allow that our thoughts of the English are hardly more moderate. We are indeed more cautious in our discourse; and perhaps by looking closely into the matter, it would be found, that this hatred is more universal and violent in them: but let us sincerely acknowledge, that ours is always too strong not to be unreasonable.

I am not surprized that particular persons should hate one another: some are wicked, and therefore hate the good; others have been offended, and resentment rather proves the weakness than the wickedness of the soul. But that whole nations should hate each other, (tho' the example of the Romans and Carthaginians, and even the experience of all times has taught us, that they are all more or less subject to those antipathies and aversions) is, in my opinion, the greatest cause of shame to human nature. The most deplorable consequence of national aversions, is, that, let them be ever so unjust, the honest people are liable

liable to them : they suffer themselves to be blinded like the rest by their prejudices. My lord ** a person of the greatest probity, being at Paris, could never prevail on himself to sit at table with a Frenchman. Monsieur ** could never speak calmly of the English. Mr. ADDISON, who has very unjustly placed GUY PATIN among our best writers, had just reason to complain of the unworthy manner this pretended philosopher has spoken of the English in his letters : where he is not satisfied with declaring, *that they are a people which he abhors ; but adds, that he looks on them among the other nations of Europe, as wolves among the different species of animals.* I would willingly make an honourable attonement in the name of my country for such an injury, without fear of its being disavowed ; if such authors any where deserved the least regard. GUY PATIN is justly fallen among us into the contempt, which his prejudices of all kinds ought necessarily to draw on him.

The frequent wars between the two nations have kindled this reciprocal hatred, which has so long subsisted : their rivalry and jealousy in trade prevent its being extinguished in times of peace. If our neighbours carry this hereditary hatred to a greater length than we, 'tis partly the effect of their policy, which is very industrious in fomenting it. They think it their interest to render odious a power that alarms them : such were the principles of king WILLIAM. Writers, whom he kept in pay, have

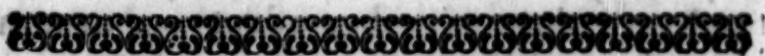
have filled the nation with the same principles, and the English have too well found their account in following them, to think of changing their notions. By their continual uneasiness, they seem to think that we are in regard to them what the Persians were to the Athenians; that the king of France is the great king: hence this invincible aversion to the people who obey him, whom they suppose that they alone prevent from giving laws to the rest of Europe. How is this dread reconcileable to the contempt they affect to throw on us? Had Sir RICHARD STEEL any reason for representing the French so formidable, if it be true, as he assures us, *that they will always tremble to meet the English sword in hand?* These fall into many contradictions in regard to us. They fear, and yet despise us: we are the nation they pay the greatest civilities to, and yet love the least: they condemn, and yet imitate us, they adopt our manners by taste, and blame them thro' policy.

Let us, Sir, leave to the mob the ridicule of those national hatreds: let us not espouse the passions, that are industriously instilled into them: they stand in need of them, since reason is not sufficient for their guide. These sentiments with the multitude hold the place of zeal for the public good: they do thro' hatred of their neighbours, what they would never do for the love of their country. Such are men; and policy consists in reaping benefit from their vices, as well as from their virtues.

tues. It employs their reason, prejudices, zeal, passions, every thing in a word, to attain the proposed end : but by turning private vices into public benefits, it does not justify them. The people of every nation are so many societies, which make part of the great one : and as each of them has its particular interests, so likewise they have one in common, which is that of humanity : and this is the first of all. Humanity is not less respectable in the stranger than in the compatriot. As Englishmen, or Frenchmen, let us serve our country : as men, let us treat one another as brethren. Let us bear no hatred to any but those who, of whatever country they happen to be, dare break thro' the sacred bands, that bind men together.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



L E T T E R VI.

To the Abbé du Bos;

Perpetual secretary to the French Academy;

On the quakers of England.

LONDON, &c.

S I R,

WHatever graces and embellishments the illustrious author of the Philosophical Letters has display'd in those which he wrote
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on the quakers of England; do not imagine that he has any where deviated from truth. His portraits are as faithful as agreeable, and I would not advise any body to retouch the pictures painted by his hand. However, since you require a serious detail of every thing that relates to those pretended reformers of the gospel, I think I can send you nothing more instructive on the subject than the apology for the doctrine and morals of this sect*, which has been translated into all the polite languages of Europe.

You will find that this work is writ in English, in a pure, plain and elegant style. As to the substance of it, 'tis said that the English divines of the different sects, who are smartly handled in it, have not as yet published any good answer to it. The quakers have the highest ideas imaginable of this book. I have heard my lord WALDEGRAVE say, that they sent a French translation of it to cardinal FLEURY, accompanied with a letter, wherein they express the greatest esteem of this minister for his probity; a most remarkable instance of homage from a sett of men and strangers, who value themselves on never flattering any, not even sovereigns.

The quakers are in truth one of the most singular sects, that have as yet appear'd. My shoemaker is one of the great divines of the congregation, and one of those who speak oft-
tenest

* By Robert Barclay, a Scotchman.

tenest and best at their meetings: * among his apprentices, he has one who may one day become an excellent man in controversy. The book I send you is a present from my hosier: he flatter'd himself that it might make some impression on me: he is an enlightened man, not less zealous in propagating his enthusiasm than in carrying on his trade.

Not long since, a very rich widow of distinction, seduced by BARCLAY'S book, embraced his doctrine. The spirit, to use their term, seized her at once, and has not since left her. She spends her life at present in travelling over England and Scotland, dispersing her riches in all places where she preaches her gospel. Equally fanatical and charitable, she seduces the weak, and relieves the distressed. The apology for the quakers must give you a high idea of their morals, tho' certain articles denote more lowness of mind than severity of manners. You will see that they are not permitted:

I. To bestow on men the titles of holiness, majesty, eminence, excellence, grace, &c: nor, in a word, to make any compliment, that may look like flattery.

II. To kneel, bow, or even uncover themselves to any man.

III. To

* The famous George Fox, whom the quakers regard as their founder, was a shoemaker of Manchester, who preach'd at Derby in 1650.

III. To use any superfluities in dress, or any thing that serves only for ornament or vanity.

IV. To game, hunt, go to plays, recreations, &c : which they say suit not with the silence, gravity, and wisdom of Christians.

V. To swear on the gospel, not only in vain and in common discourse, but even before a magistrate.

VI. To resist those who attack them, to wage war, or to fight in any cause whatsoever.

In consequence of these principles they are all honest folks. They are the only fanatics at this day, who do not try to disturb the society, and breath nothing but peace and tranquillity : which is the more astonishing, as they took their rise amidst the fury of the civil wars ; and as their primitive apostles were the most implacable enemies to royalty.

Tho' the manner of dress of the men is always plain and remote from all pomp or shew; the women are much relaxed of late in this point of discipline. They are now come to wear silks, ribbons and laces; and there is little difference between them and others of their sex, but that they do not admit any fashions that can in the least offend modesty. And what do they not gain by rejecting them ! Women cannot possibly invent any ornaments that embellish them as much as their virtue.

I am sorry I have not a copy of the letter, which the quakers sent to cardinal FLEURY : it must be a curious piece. I have seen some of theirs that are very laconic, and in which is seen that noble simplicity that approaches so near the sublime. The prejudices against them hinder their having justice done them in many things. Moreover it must be allowed, that while we admire what is remote from us in time and place, we are but little struck with what passes in our days and under our eyes. If we had remaining to us from some people of Greece, a letter like that which the quakers of England wrote to king JAMES II. on his accession to the crown, what a high opinion should we not entertain of it ! What virtue, should we say, must not those men have had, who dared to write to their sovereigns in such a style ! Let us say more ; if those, whose counsel this unfortunate prince followed, had spoke to him with as much wisdom, courage and sincerity ; he would never perhaps have been obliged to abandon his kingdoms ; and his family might be at this day on the throne. You will judge of this by the letter itself, which is short and deserves to be preserved.

“ **T**Hese are to testify our concern to
 “ thee for our friend Charles, whom
 “ we hope thou wilt imitate in all things
 “ honest.

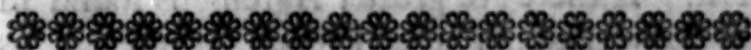
“ We

“ We are informed, that thou art not of
 “ the religion of the country, no more than
 “ we: wherefore we may reasonably expect
 “ that thou wilt grant us the same liberty
 “ which thou takest for thyself.

“ We hope, that in this, and in all other
 “ things, thou wilt procure the good of thy
 “ people: which will oblige us to pray that
 “ thy reign may be long and happy.”

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



LETTER VII.

To the Marquis DU T**;

*On conversation with the fair sex; on foreign
 travel; and remarks on the Clubs of England.*

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD,

THE English, unless when in love, fear
 the company of women, as much as
 the French delight in it: they think the fair
 sex are made only to take possession of their
 hearts, and seldom or never to afford any a-
 musement to their minds. They prefer the
 pleasure of toasting their healths in a tavern,
 to that of chatting with them in a circle.

Vol. I.

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They treat them, as if they had been as much of another species as of another sex. For the most part they look on them as good for nothing but to dissipate their vapours, or ease the fatigue of business.

Such of them as have resided at Paris, endeavour to justify their nation in this respect, by saying that the women in England are not so amusing as in France. But supposing this to be fact, is it not the fault of the men? There are certain defects in both sexes, the blame of which ought less to be laid to the charge of that liable to it, than to the other which is the cause of it. If there are greater Agrémens found in the conversation of the French women, 'tis not because they have more wit, but because it has been better exercised. The presence of one man here is sufficient to impose silence on a whole circle of women. At Paris, a Petit-maitre, who is not quite grown to man's estate, is able to make a dozen Belles move all together that pretty instrument called a tongue. But the English women are neither to be commended nor blamed for their taciturnity: they are silent only on account of the confusion they are under in company; and this confusion arises purely from their not being accustomed to it. 'Tis less their fault than that of the men, who neglect them too much, and in whom the dangerous habit of drinking destroys the delicacy of sentiments, and perhaps even the desire of pleasing. Those who are too much addicted to the pleasures of the bottle,
are

are not well disposed to the conversation of women: they are seldom amorous, and generally libertins.

The English lose a great deal in conversing so little with the sex, whom nature has endowed with the graces, and whose company has constant charms, and a certain sweetness not to be found in that of men. The conversation of women polishes and softens our behaviour: by the habit we acquire of endeavouring to please them, we contract a tone of voice equally agreeable to both sexes.

The men are over-negligent of themselves: among them all conversation languishes, or ends in disputes. In order to command esteem from one another, they strive on both sides to gain a superiority; and thus they give reciprocal offence. None of them will bear to be run down, and they conclude by hating him they have not been able to overcome. Those who have the most wit, do not sufficiently reflect, that others are never so well pleased with us, as when we give them room to be satisfied with themselves.

With regard to women, we take a surer way to gain their esteem: we study to please them, and we succeed. 'Tis the sense of what one sex owes to the other, that inspires that insinuating tone of voice, and affectionate behaviour, in which true politeness consists, and the habit of which is not to be contracted but in the company of women. The custom of living with what is most valuable in both sexes,

makes the pleasure and happiness of life. The manner of speech and dress equally point out those persons, who have not been in the way of conversing with women. And 'tis by too much neglecting this custom, that the English have a certain disagreeable bluntness in their character. Even those who come to Paris with the advantage of speaking our language easily, astonish us by an air of confusion, which seldom quits them. And the cause is very plain: some of them, after quitting the universities, come to London, and spend their time in coffee-houses, taverns, and those other places so pernicious to youth, by equally corrupting the heart and understanding. Others are sent to study the manners of foreign countries, before they are acquainted with their own: which is another inconveniency. The design of travelling should be in search of wisdom: and those who have no notion of it, are very unlikely to find it out. The most part of the governors, to whose care those young folks are committed, are not good guides: they cannot give what they have not. From the colleges whence they are taken, they bring the vicious habit of spending their time in smoking and drinking; and they cannot form their pupils to that politeness which they themselves are strangers to, and to the ways of the world, which they have never seen.

Some authors, and among others doctor JOSEPH HALL, one of the most illustrious English bishops, have very much condemned the

the custom of their nation, in sending youth abroad before they are in a condition to reap any advantage from their travels. We have a French translation of a book of his, intitled : *Quo Vadis ? A just censure of travel, as it is commonly undertaken by the gentlemen of our nation.* 'Tis certain that the English travel more than any other people of Europe. How much so ever their riches facilitate this custom, the sea, which surrounds them, is perhaps the principal cause. They look on their isle as a sort of prison : and the first use they make of their love of liberty, is to get out of it. I think one may safely say, that they would travel less, were they not inhabitants of an island.

The education of our youth is indeed different from that of this country, tho' not much better. They are ruined by being too soon thrust into the world. At an age when their total ignorance frees them from all apprehensions, 'tis dangerous to have no other tutors but women. At this day, as soon as a young man has quitted the university, he is introduced into all sorts of company ; where his stupidity and petulance serve him instead of wit and merit. He never thinks of correcting those ridiculous airs, which succeed with him. Far from blushing at passing for a *Petit-maitre* , he glories in a title, which might be taken for the true synonymous term to (FAT) an impertinent fool, if the abbé Girard had not demonstrated that our language cannot furnish one. In France the women

put the finishing hand to the education of youth. And those who have their reasons for taking up this employment, those who have no other calling but that of training up a young man, and putting him into the world, are generally very dangerous acquaintance : one gets rid of them at a cheap rate, if he contracts but ridiculous habits.

The defects, to which the English are subject, are perhaps attended with fewer inconveniences to the community ; of which light, stupid, thoughtless young people are the scourge. If we have so many who retain these vices in riper years, 'tis partly because we are so little accustomed to travel. Our neighbours are wiser than us in this respect. In Germany the eldest sons of great houses commonly make the tour of Europe : and thus those who are destined for the highest employments, find in seeing other nations, wherewithall to enrich their understanding, form their manners, and become useful to their native country. The reason why the French are so full of prejudices, is that, for want of going abroad, they are ignorant of the different excellencies of the neighbouring nations. Our neighbours come to us, to learn our politeness : why do we not go to them, to learn the virtues peculiar to them ? However, it may perhaps with the same justice be objected to the English, that they travel much without divesting themselves of their national prejudices, which are not less unreasonable
than

than ours; and even without quitting their vicious habits. If they imitate the manners of strangers, 'tis frequently by humour and without choice, nor do they always hit upon the best part of them. Residence at Paris inspires some of them with a taste for luxury, but few learn sobriety from the example of the Italians.

The little commerce the English have with the sex on one hand, and on the other their inclination to intemperance, have given birth to all those societies or clubs that meet at public-houses. *Our modern celebrated clubs*, says Mr. ADDISON, * *are founded upon eating and drinking*. Thence sprung that great society of Free-Masons, which makes so much noise in Europe at present, and the revels of which are its chief mysteries: thence comes, that the English of all degrees, from the peer to the tradesman, have their particular clubs. In vain have some affected to grace this sort of associations with the respectable name of academies; the time and place of meeting sufficiently let us into the knowledge of their business. All those societies in a word, under the imposing names of independents, LITERATI, VIRTUOSI, &c. are nothing more than clubs of toppers: and after the pleasures of the table, they seldom relish any but those of gaming, or perhaps others of a more dangerous nature. Their chief academical exercises

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* Spectator, No. IX.

are pretty nearly the same with some that are mention'd in the life of ALEXANDER. At the funeral games, which he caused to be celebrated on the death of CALANUS, he appointed a combat of drinkers, and prizes for the victorious; of which there died near forty on the spot, and the conqueror himself did not survive his victory three days.*

People here vastly affect to be popular, and in order to appear such they even prostitute themselves to the vilest of the populace. A gentleman begs as a favour to be admitted into a club of chairmen; and sometimes the greatest men of the realm disdain not to receive the lowest of plebeians among them. I will cite you an example, within my own knowledge.

A wine-merchant, now very rich, began his fortune in one of those London public-houses so convenient for young folks, and where the vice that draws them thither, prevents their being nice in regard to the wine they are served with. This publican's complaisance for youth, and his dexterity in metamorphosing Portugal wines into French, soon enabled him to take one of the most noted and expensive taverns of the town; which the greatest men of the kingdom still frequent.

There

* *Quæ gloria est capere multum? Cum penes te palma fuerit, & propinationes tuas strati somno ac vomitantes recusaverint, cum superstes toto convivio fueris, cum omnes viceris virtute magnifica, & nemo tam capax vini fuerit, vinceres a dolio.* Senec. Epist. Lib. XII.

There he became so rich in a few years, that he quitted the troublesome business of retail, and turn'd wholesale wine-merchant. Immediately these same lords, for whom he had often filled a glass of wine, incorporated him into one of their sham academies. And 'tis not impossible, that by means of his own riches and their protection, he may one day become a member of parliament for the city of London; and then, in order to make a figure, he may declaim both against them and the ministry.

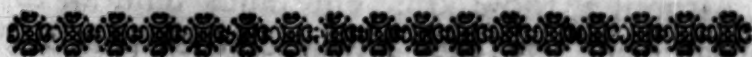
Although those different clubs tend all to the same end, yet they have each their particular by-laws. If in antient times the vestals at Rome were obliged to keep up the sacred fire; in like manner there is a venerable order here, who have made themselves a law to sacrifice continually to BACCHUS: the temple must never be without priests; each has his hours of duty; some for the day, others for the night. Those of the hottest zeal, may freely go and offer sacrifice as oft, and continue as long as they think proper. Whoever has been once admitted, is sure, at what time soever his fit of devotion seizes him, to find some of the fraternity employed in the service of the deity they revere, and the altar constantly loaded with new offerings. In this sanctuary they make use of an incense not quite so fragrant as that of Arabia: viz. that which exhales from the plant formerly called the Nicotian weed; and which in France is seldom burnt

burnt but in guard-houses. One thing is remark'd to the glory of these worthy associates, which is, that they have not as yet felt the relaxation, which so soon creeps into the best established societies. It costs somewhat to persevere in the practice of virtue and temperance : but vicious habits are their own support.

I have the honour to be,

My lord,

Your lordship's most humble, &c.



LETTER VIII.

To Monsieur DE BUFFONS,

On the great improvements made by the English in arts, sciences, and mechanical trades; the methods whereby they excell other nations in them: with some remarks on their want of taste.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

HOW has it happened that many illustrious men have given room to be reproached with having introduced quackery into the sciences, which are the most contrary to it? To you I appeal, sir, whose happy genius has penetrated into all the useful parts of them, and whose superior judgment is capable of

of determining their value and connections. Metaphysics excepted, which is the source of sublime knowledge, and the mother of invention; do you not find that there is a sensible analogy between the most abstruse sciences and the arts subject to the compass? The continual labour of the hands performs in the latter, what incessant application of the mind does in the former: nay perhaps the principal talent for succeeding in both kinds, is but a laborious patience: and is this patience a virtue that ought so vastly to flatter our self-love, or in regard to which it is easy to impose on any other eyes but those of the vulgar?

There are many arts and sciences, in which a person is sure to distinguish himself by a constant application: all depends on beginning early, and spending time enough on them. It is no longer a wonder to see children of ten years of age dance on the stage, or play on some instruments; and we have no greater reason to be surprized at seeing others of the same age resolve problems: the former would have done the same with the latter, if instead of the principles of musick, they had been taught EUCLID's elements. A celebrated Italian author tells us, that he had seen a shepherd, who used to divert himself by throwing up eggs into the air, and catching them without breaking; and that he had attain'd such a degree of perfection in this exercise, that he could play with four at a time for several minutes together. *I do not remember,* continues he,

he, to have ever observed a more serious air than that of this man ; who by dint of application to this trifling diversion, was become as grave as a senator : and 'tis very probable that the same daily attention properly applied might have made him an abler mathematician than ARCHIMEDES.

Tho' we should appear rash to those very persons whom we intend to instruct, let us closely examine the most part of those men who appear so great to us : possibly they have raised themselves so high above others, only by being more laborious. Nature has been more equal in the distribution of her gifts, than is generally imagined. Labour frequently makes all the difference between the sensible and the great man. Not that I would refuse to great men, of what kind soever, due respect and praise. I only intend to encourage others to try their strength, in order to merit the like. My chief aim is to point out the advantages of study and labour ; the two only ways that lead to a brilliant reputation in arts and sciences : and to attain it, nothing is wanting to several people but a sufficient knowledge of their own abilities. Some thro' diffidence enter not the lists, others miss the prize purely by not having used their utmost efforts.

I cannot give a more striking example of what I advance than that of the English. This people is of all others known, the most impatient under every thing uneasy to them, and at the same time the most constant in what they propose

propose to themselves. 'Tis by this continual application, and this indefatigable courage, that the English surpass other nations in the sciences grounded on calculations, as well as in the arts that depend on the rule and compass. The same difference that lies between common Geometricians and NEWTON, is found between our French workmen and an artist such as GRAHAM. If the mathematician, by the depth of his meditations, and the laws of his calculus, has determined the form and motions of this vast universe; the other, no less inventive in his art, has contrived that curious instrument, which, in the hands of our academians, has lately discovered to us the true figure of the earth.

It must be allowed to the honour of the English, that they have the glory of being the first improvers of the most extensive branch of our sure knowledge; I mean experimental philosophy, of which lord chancellor BACON laid down the precepts above a century ago, and in which HARVEY, BOYLE, NEWTON, and dr. HALES, * with whom you are so well acquainted, have made such beautiful and great discoveries. The reason that mankind had made so little progress in the knowledge of nature, for two thousand years, is that they had taken bad roads to arrive at it. BACON saw this, and resolved to ring the bell to call all those of his days together, and put them

* M. de Buffons has translated dr. Hales's Vegetable Statics.

them into the right way. This is the ingenious expression he makes use of concerning his Book of the *Progress and Advancement of Learning*, which he wrote in English, and wished to see translated into a language common to all the learned in Europe. *Wherefore*, says he, *since I have only taken upon me to ring a bell, to call other wits together; it cannot but be consonant to my desire to have the bell heard as far as can be.*

As for mechanical arts, they can flourish nowhere without the sciences, from which they flow as from their source; they surpass the arts of taste, in being of sure and invariable utility to mankind. Such are the fruits which a trading nation reaps from navigation; such the advantages of a canal, which communicates to a whole country the plenty of neighbouring provinces, and the riches of the two extremities of the earth. And indeed how great must be the benefit that would result to France from a canal in Burgundy, that would join the SAONE to the SEINE or the LOIRE, and consequently the Ocean to the Mediterranean! such is in fine, in a part much neglected among us, but the abuses of which I hope to see corrected by your example; such, I say, is the product of a forest well taken care of. By an equally honourable and useful industry, private advantage, and the good of the state are procured together. A private person, who by successful trials has improved his land, cannot increase his income, without doing real service

service to his country : in all those cases, public interest is so connected with private, that they are absolutely inseparable.

On the contrary, arts of taste have not properly speaking a settled intrinsic value. Their price changes according to the modes, which likewise change according to the times and the caprices of men. The Dresden Porcelaine, which has lowered the value of that of Japan and China, will soon have its turn. The most beautiful cabinets, with balls for feet, are now sold at a very low price. In a word, we can do without painting and sculpture ; but we cannot absolutely do without the arts, which fertilize the land, nor those which defend us from the injuries of the weather. Every reasonable Frenchman will agree, that the art by which we go to China to exchange the superfluities of Europe for gold, which is the riches of all ages, is preferable to the art, which teaches us to destroy this same gold by spreading it on our cloaths and post-chaises.

And what people is better skilled in the art of navigation, and more sensibly feel the effects of it by plenty of all things, than the English ? They were the inventors of most of its useful instruments : for not to mention the compass, of which they claim the invention, we owe to them the quadrant and the new instrument for taking altitudes, which you have had from hence for your private use, and which the learned and vigilant minister who is at the head of our marine, has lately sent to
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all the ports of France. They were likewise the first that built ships after designed plans ; and erected those ingenious stoves for bending timber, which we now begin to use with great success.

This people, equally industrious and laborious, have a great advantage over their neighbours in all things which require a good deal of time to compleat. England has more than any other country of those machines so useful to the state, which really multiply men by lessening their work ; and by means of which one man can execute what would take up thirty without such assistance. Thus by turning a wheel, a boy of ten years old gives to a hundred things made of steel, all at the same time, that beautiful polish, which few of our French workmen can imitate. Thus in the coal-pits at NEWCASTLE, a single Person can, by means of an engin equally surprizing and simple, raise five hundred tons of water to the height of a hundred and eighty feet. The draining of this water facilitates the digging of the coal out of the pit ; which coal is of the greatest advantage to the nation, by abundantly supplying the deficiency of wood for firing. This same machine has another use : it furnishes at the same time a country that wants water, with a river that may be called artificial.

'Tis not in great works alone that the English excell : the most common trades here seem to partake of the perfection of arts. In
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all lock-work, which is so rudely performed in our country, I equally admire the patience and industry of the English workman. RAVECHET does not finish the hinge of a gold snuff-box with greater care, than they do that of a cloaths-press here. With regard to the neatness and solidity of work of all kinds, they succeed better in the least towns of England, than in the most considerable cities of France. I have seen here, in country places, common hands work and put the several parts of a piece of joiner's work together with a degree of exactness and propriety, which the best master-joiners of Paris would find it difficult to come near.

The English artisan has one quality, extremely commendable, and peculiar to him, which is, never to swerve from the degree of perfection in his trade, which he is master of: whatever he undertakes, he always does as well as he can. The French workman is far from deserving this commendation. His reputation is scarcely established, when he grows negligent: whatever faults there are in his work, more frequently proceed from his desire of cheating, than from his ignorance. On the contrary, the care an Englishman constantly takes to do his work well, seems to bespeak in him a notion of the exact, which suffers him not to depart from it. In this respect, it may be said, that the meanest workman here has noble thoughts of the trade he professes. But at the same time it should seem

as if the idea of the exact is the only one the Englishman has of the beautiful. The genteel escapes him: he requires stronger features, to strike him. There is nothing which is not susceptible of the elegance of the out-lines. For us it is not sufficient that an elbow chair be convenient, we require further that its shape be agreeable. Our apartments are effectually adorned with what serves only to furnish those of London. The English workmen take no less pains than ours in seeking this gracefulness in the shape of things: but notwithstanding all their endeavours, they have not been able to attain it. As much as I admire their invention in mechanical arts, I am equally offended at all their productions in the arts of taste. The rule and compass, which guide them in the one, are only troublesome to them in the others. Does not an over-scrupulous exactitude cool the genius? The exact is a near neighbour to the stiff: and what renders the access to the graces so difficult, is perhaps, that it is impossible to gain it without exactitude; and if this alone be attended to, one runs the risk of receding from it.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

L E T T E R S

LETTER IX.

To Monsieur FRERET,

Perpetual secretary to the Academy of Inscriptions and
Belles-Lettres ;*On parasites and their encouragers.*

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

IN this nation, haughtier perhaps than is usually thought, one of the most mortifying conditions is that of a chaplain to a great man. The title with which this ecclesiastic is invested, is the very thing that debases him : he obtains the honour of being admitted to the table of his lord, I might as well have said his master, only on condition of acting the lowest of parts, that of a parasite, or, which is much the same thing, that of a slave. The peers of the realm, as dukes, earls, &c. have each a certain number of chaplains, that is to say a better sort of servants, who instead of wearing his livery, wear that of the clergy, and depend more on their patron than on the church.

Thus the English author, who has best described the manners of his nation, speaks of an unreasonable custom, which great families expect their chaplains will strictly observe.

I have often wondered, says he, at the indecency of discarding the holiest man from the table, as soon as the most delicious parts of the entertainment are served up.---It was usual for the priest in old times to feast upon the sacrifice, nay the honey-cake, while the hungry laity looked upon him with great devotion; or as the late lord ROCHESTER describes it in a very lively manner:

And while the priest did eat, the people stared.

*At present the custom is inverted: the laity feast, while the priest stands by as an humble spectator. This necessarily puts the good man upon making great ravages on all the dishes that stand near him, and distinguishing himself by voraciousness of appetite, as knowing that his time is short.---In this case I know not which to censure, the patron or the chaplain, the insolence of power, or the abjectness of dependence.**

You will agree with me, sir, that the arrogance of which mr. ADDISON accuses the great men of England in this place, and the debasement, with which he reproaches the clergy of the second rank, agree ill with the encomiums of modesty and generosity, which in other places he so profusely bestows on his countrymen, and particularly with what he says of them in the passage of his works mention'd in your last letter. As he was the son of a minister, he must be more sensible than
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* Tatler, Vol. IV. No. 255.

another of the contempt, with which the English use their church-men: and yet possibly he has not told the true cause of it. 'Tis, if I mistake not, in the contempt the great men have for religion, that we are to seek the source of that which they dare to shew towards its ministers: and this misfortune is the unhappy consequence of the licentiousness, which is here authorized by the government.

In France we have not the scandal to see persons invested with the most venerable character acting by their state of life the most despicable of all personages. Perhaps there are more flatterers there than any where else, since unhappily flattery is a national vice among us: but yet at least they are taken indifferently in all degrees of the community. I am sorry it is true, that the progress of vice has followed that of politeness. In former times, when the minds of men were more simple, and their hearts less corrupted, great men had their fools to make them laugh: at present they have their blockheads to flatter them.

In France, there is commonly at the tables of the rich one blockhead upon the establishment. I do not pretend to say there is but one: pretty frequently, the whole company is much of the same stamp, not excepting the person who keeps the table. But here I confine myself to the blockhead, who is best regaled. The master of the house exerts all his wit for this fellow: 'tis a hireling parasite,

who listens to him while he talks of things he does not understand, and admires him when he knows not what he says; who begs the applause of the rest for him, and by a hearty laugh puts them in tune to relish his wretched pleasantries: 'tis in a word the head of the whole band of blockheads.

Such as have made their fortune in England are usually wiser; their chief thoughts are bent on encreasing it: they take pride in no other wit but that of multiplying their riches, and this is an effect of their good sense. They resign to the great all the ridicule that pomp and vanity draw after them. Instead of imitating their extravagance, they make advantage of it. They do not set up for men of taste, when they have none, but still continue good merchants; and their children follow the same dealings that enriched their parents. How very beneficial must such a prudent conduct prove both to themselves and to the state!

'Tis but too true, that fortune's favorites among us are far from being so rational: many times, ashamed of the condition to which they owe their wealth, they quit it as soon as they find an opportunity. They do not confine themselves, whether in their houses or equipages, to copying the luxury of persons of quality; they more frequently outstrip it, and thereby draw on themselves at the same time, both the jealousy of the great whom they strive to eclipse, and the hatred of the people whom they

they shock by the insolence of their pomp. They have moreover the madness of affecting to be witty; and how can they avoid thinking themselves so? They are eternally beset with fawning parasites, who study their ridicules with the sole view of offering incense to them. The celebrated author of the *Enfant prodigue* could not find a better method of exposing the bad company EUPHEMON kept, and the friends he had chosen, than by making him say to himself: *they praised me to my face*. This is one of those strokes, which point out the great master.

On both sides, how contemptible are the parts acted both by those who discover so ridiculous a vanity, and those who shew such mean complaisance for them. Vain-glorious rich, you are betray'd when flattered: and how is it possible that the smোক of such vile incense rises to your heads! Base flatterers, you pay dear for the caresses made ye. They are sold ye for applause, duty, and submission. *Oh! how much more excellent are you*, says the wise EPICTETUS to those who cannot condescend to such meanness, *you do not praise him whom you believe not worthy of your praises: you are not obliged to bear his insolence, and the haughty manner in which he treats his guests: such is your gain*.

What contempt! what hatred ought not mankind to have for those vile creatures! Whoever is base enough to live by this infamous trade, would be equally capable of as-

laffinating the person he flatters, if he had the resolution to do the deed, and found his interest in it. But such is the blindness of the great and opulent, that they look on every thing as their due: they are less deceived by others, than they deceive themselves. Had there been a tribunal erected against flattery, there would be no prosecutions of the criminals: because none would complain of being flattered.

No wonder, that so many prefer the company of a blockhead to that of a man of sense: the narrower mens talents are, the greater their vanity. The one flatters their self-love by the superiority they perceive they have over him; the other would but mortify it by being compelled to acknowledge his superiority over them. We love those with whom we may remonstrate; and fear those who have it in their power to pronounce judgment against us: thus it is that blockheads are in request, and become the darlings of those who find them inferior to themselves in parts.

After the example of women jealous of their beauty, who are careful in choosing companions, whose ugliness may serve as a foil to their charms; those called wits, practice this sort of coquetry: they have commonly a blockhead in their train, whom they stile their friend, and who in reality is but their setter-off. They know the effect of contrasts; and it is in order to shine forth to greater advantage, that they affect the company

pany of a man the most devoid of knowledge and understanding they can find. The block-head is always ready to admire: he is the Merry-Andrew, who holds forth to the mob on the great merit of the strong man's wonderful feats. He is an entity much resembling those birds that are taught to talk, and which they themselves train up to repeat all the fine things they desire to have said of them. In fine he is a flatterer, whose incense, fulsome as it is, inebriates and hinders them from seeing their own defects. Yet the stupidity of those admirers injures them more than the jealousy of their rivals. TACITUS has said it: *praisers are the most prejudicial sort of enemies.* There is no country, where the greatest men in other respects, have not the meanness to take up with such low creatures. But all these puffs do bad service to those whose praises they sound. Like to a trumpet, which is their symbol, they only make a disagreeable or stunning noise.

You are in the right, sir: we stand much in want of a LA BRUYERE and a MOLIERE to censure the manners of our age. I find as much of truth as of strength in the portrait you have drawn of it: your letter is full of those strokes, which equally do honour to the heart and mind. A masculine virtue can alone inspire this zeal for public good breeding, at a time when indecency is so much in fashion, that whosoever dares to declare himself

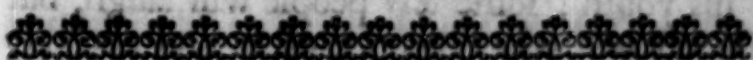
self a libertine, is almost secure of passing for a philosopher.

Vices stalk at this day with upright front! Perhaps they are not more enormous than those of preceding ages; but they are more impudent. Passions stick too close to man to expect rooting them out: it is not so with his ridicules; a lively portraiture of them in all their extravagance is sometimes sufficient to give him a disgust to them. I must own at the same time that they are like *PROTEUS*: pursue them in one shape, and they soon appear in another. *Petits-maitres* have succeeded the *Marquis's*. Physicians were formerly pedants bristled with Greek and Latin: at present they are fops, who affect gallantry and *bons Mots*; and at least divert their patients, if they do not cure them. Their directions are madrigals on the progress or cure of a distemper, wherein they cause the gentleness and agreeableness of their wit to be admired. One might make very diverting collections of them. Are not such ridicules more shocking still than those of *MOLIERE's* physicians? The itch of pleasantry, with which our nation has been so often reproached, has now caught the gravest professions: and decency of behaviour is no longer observed in any state of life. The women have even shook off its yoke. What we call a strain of gallantry, our fathers called a strain of licentiousness.

We must not confound with the ill-nature of satyrs, those innocent paintings of ridicules, the sole intention of which is to correct them. There appear at present but too many of those writings, more dangerous than the defects they find fault with, and the authors of which point less at vice itself than at the vicious. Particular satyrs are as pernicious, as a general censure of morals is beneficial to the community. He who seeks only to gratify the malignity of his readers, is a corrupter who deserves punishment. He who attacks the ridicules, or the depravity of the morals of his age, is a virtuous citizen who fights for the public cause: and in this case he ought to deal with the vicious as soldiers with their enemies, fire on them in general, but take no particular aim.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



LETTER X.

To Monsieur DE LA CHAUSÉE,

Member of the French Academy;

On unequal and clandestine marriages.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

Public diversions are not so indifferent as many people suppose them: the stage has

has an influence on our morals, and it is not to be doubted that the liberty of that of London contributes in part towards the little regard the English have for what is called decency. Models are constantly presented on it, which one passion or other easily determines a person to follow, from the moment he has shook off the yoke of shame. How much are we not indebted to you for bringing none on our stage, but those the imitation of which is beneficial to the community! How glorious it is for an author, to have no reason to blush at his success! Your pieces are a school of the soundest morals.

This is the country, where unequal marriages are the most common: the curb of decency hinders but few of the English from following their caprices, or indulging their passions. If a master marries his servant-maid, a duke's daughter a foot-soldier, or an old rich widow a puppy, whose sole merit is his youth; some few people will laugh, but the rest will take no notice of it, and no-body will be surprized. Those ladies whose birth gives them a rank at court, are not afraid of derogating, because they cannot lose it. This is a country of liberty, and this liberty is stretched so far as to do silly things almost without incurring censure. Decorum is little respected, and vice is render'd familiar.

Our laws have wisely provided all possible means to prevent children marrying without the consent of their parents, lest they should
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enter into engagements prejudicial to themselves, and dishonourable to their families. Youth is too blind, and too much abandoned to its passions, to discern its true interest. The laws of England are very different: they tend all to favour even the most indecent marriages. They do not require public notice and ceremony enough in an act, which, the more important it is to the contracting parties, the more it ought to concern those to whom they belong.

As people may marry here in whatever place they will, I have been told that a minister, who was actually in prison, had contrived, in order to get a livelihood, to hang out a board from his window, with these words: *Here marriages are performed cheap.* I am well aware that this will be looked on as a joke; I do not pretend even to throw any suspicion on the wisdom of the English legislators: doubtless they have had good reasons for dictating the laws they have established; but the abuses of them are very pernicious. They authorize the wiles which the most profligate harlot can invent, in order to seduce a young man of family: they favour vice, and render indissoluble the shameful knot, by which she has found means to bind him to her. One cannot be too much upon his guard in England against this sort of women: they have a wonderful address in laying snares for youth, and in some measure wiping off the scandal of their lives, which had separated

rated them from society, by a marriage which restores them to it. Their most common craft indeed is to make the person drunk, whom they intend to hook in. Wine gives so much empire to our senses over us, only because it entirely destroys that of our reason.

In this condition a girl that designs to be the wife of a man, who would blush to own her for his mistress, works him up to such a pitch by her dangerous careffes, that she makes him declare, before witnesses provided for that purpose, that he takes her to his wedded wife. Nay it frequently happens that he has no other intent in giving his consent, but to carry on a joke: but here all joking on this subject becomes serious; the I WILL is taken literally. She who resolves to be married, takes care to have a chaplain ready: the minister of the gospel lends his assistance to this mystery of iniquity: and what in our country would prove no more than a farce, reprehensible by the civil magistrate, in England becomes an act authorized by the laws.

Thus it happens that a man, who went to bed very quietly and very drunk, in the morning finds himself married to a person for whom he has the utmost contempt. Such unions cannot well be supposed to produce good subjects to the state. If men abandon themselves to the brutality of their passions, 'tis incumbent on the laws to supply the prudence they are deficient in; and to prevent, as far as is consistent with the good of the community,

community, a person from being made miserable the rest of his life by one moment's frailty. I am acquainted with two brothers, who, to their great regret, have been drawn into this snare by two sisters; and who perhaps aggravate their fault, instead of repairing it, by using their wives as their servants. This is to punish themselves as much as them; 'tis adding one evil to another; 'tis the most cruel extremity, to which a man can possibly be reduced.

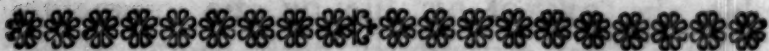
What has given me occasion to write you this letter, is that a few days ago a gentleman of Lincoln, who fell into this misfortune, the next morning, reflecting on the folly he had committed, shot himself thro' the head. This is carrying the matter a little too far: how silly soever this marriage might have been, his self-murder was still a sillier action; for, as LA FONTAINE says,

Mieux vaut goujat de bout, qu'empereur enterré.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

LETTER



LETTER XI.

To Monsieur H * * * ;

Containing remarks on affectation of singularity, exemplified in the English and French.

LONDON, &c.

S I R,

THE difference between a person rendering himself illustrious, and making himself be talked of, cannot be better expressed than you have done it: I should be surprized to see one of your age make such a distinction, had I not known that you are born with those happy talents, that do not permit one to mistake the mark, to which he ought to point. You still raise their value by the prudent use you make of them: and thereby you strike out a difficult path indeed, but a sure one to the pinnacle of fame.

Without doubt no country in the world affords a greater number of singular men than England; and it seems no difficult task to assign the reason: the English make a merit at least, if not a virtue, of this singularity. Here a man renders himself as illustrious by follies, which in other places would render him ridiculous, as by the most beneficial actions to society. They love to make themselves famous

famous at a small expence. Hence it comes that one makes a merit of having a hunting equipage, and never going to the chace; and another with five thousand pounds a-year affects to wear a coarser cloath than that of his liveries. In short, every body in this country piques himself on living up to his fancy. Thus among the great there are some who blush not for vices, scarcely pardonable in the meanest of the mob: thus among the common people, we see impudent fellows assume a pride, that even wealth and quality cannot excuse.

The English esteem this variety of humours and characters as an Encomium on their nation, and the effect of their liberty. Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE, mr. ADDISON, and generally all their authors have wrote its apology. They reproach us with being all of a piece; they say our nation is but a herd of cattle: and yet 'tis this pretended defect which makes us more sociable at least, if not more virtuous, than the English. I cannot discern the beauties of a variety of characters, the result of which is but vice and ridicule. The Greeks and Romans were, in my opinion, as free as the English can possibly be, and yet they never boasted of singularity. Caprice was no merit among them: they chiefly valued themselves on being the most knowing and reasonable people of the earth.

I own, there are some commendable singularities, if we may give this name, which in

the French language conveys an idea of blame, to qualities that are real virtues. If the English distinguished themselves by such only, we ought to take them for our masters : but how far is London from being a good school of morals for the rest of Europe ! The singularity, with which the English are reproached, what art so ever they employ to justify it, always proceeds from some irregularity of the mind, or some ambitious desires lurking in the heart. One is willing to be talked of, and has not always wherewithal to gain his point by the different high-roads to merit. He who cannot transmit his name to posterity by building a temple, burns that of Ephesus to immortalize himself.

It is not so difficult to be singular, as those persuade themselves, who pride in appearing so : they need only push their character, whatever it be, to excess, and have no regard to decency : 'tis in every body's power to make himself remark'd, if he will run all risks for that purpose. The people of sense are enemies to singularity, they look on it as a defect, and therefore it is acted as the greatest of all ridicules. *If those, says the Abbé DE BELGARDE, who affect airs of singularity, did comprehend how shocking all affectation is, they would take great care to affect nothing.* We have a natural aversion to every counterfeit, and despise those who cannot recommend themselves otherwise than by a false imitation. I am sorry that there is room for reproaching
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How can a man capable of reasoning constrain himself all his life to act the distracted, and propose to himself the imitation of a defect, as the research of a virtue? Tho' he should actually purchase the reputation of a man of genius at this price, he would still purchase it very dear. But it is the same case with all our follies, we pay for them more than they are worth. The comedy of the *Distract* * can make no great impression on any but the common part of the audience. Its fund, if I am not mistaken, is vicious. Reasonable people will no more laugh at a man, who has the misfortune to be hurried away by involuntary distractions, than at another who is subject to a vertigo. Comedy should act such defects only, as it may possibly correct. Pleasantries bestowed on a cripple, will be of just as much service towards making him walk upright, as RENARD's piece will be towards

• A French play.

wards correcting a man born distracted. But if any one affect distraction, he it is, who ought not to be spared: the business some people make of seeming not to know what they do, proceeds purely from an apprehension of passing for men of the common stamp. They should be made sensible, how far this wretched affectation debases them below those, whom they take such pains to avoid resembling. Whoever would endeavour to impose on us, even tho' it were by appearing miserable, deserves to be unmasked and exposed to public laughter. Thus the *Malade imaginaire* is a subject truly theatrical. We love to see a man laugh'd out of his faults: but it is barbarity to mock his infirmities.

Singularity in dress generally denotes some defect in the understanding. In *accoutrements*, says MONTAGNE, 'tis pusillanimity to point one's self out by some particular and uncommon fashion. In France we have a good number of folks, who fall under this censure, and matter not being laughed at, provided they cause themselves to be taken notice of. The affectation of their behaviour hurts us, by appearing to be a censure on the received customs: and a single person is not a proper match for the whole community. They are fond of passing for models, and they only excite the laughter or contempt of those, whose esteem they endeavour to usurp. We laugh at the man, who, in order to shine forth more bright, makes use of a varnish, which tar-

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nishes

nishes the lustre of his merit: we despise a blockhead, who, without having the essential qualities of his pattern, dares to affect all his ridicules. 'Tis not through reason but folly, that most part of mankind go out of the common road. *The wiseman ought inwardly to withdraw his soul from the croud, and keep it in liberty and a condition to form a sound judgment of things: but as to outward appearance, he ought to follow the fashions and forms in general use.** CARDANUS, esteemed as a fool, was singular in his dress. SENECA attributes this thought to ARISTOTLE: *nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiæ*. In consequence of this maxim, which is in greater credit than it deserves, some study to be singular, in order to pass for men of genius: but in the most part of this class, as mr. BAYLE very justly remarks on the subject of CARDANUS, *'Tis much folly mixed with little sense.*

It cannot be denied that the greatest men always have in some respects the mark of human frailty. Without any difference in their organs from those of common men, it is possible that those strong applications of the mind, which produce great discoveries in sciences, and master-pieces in arts, permit them not to enter into all the little details of civil life. They neglect some as frivolous, others they reject as troublesome. They would believe they compromised the superiority they find they have

* Montagne.

above other men, if they allowed themselves to be governed by example. But, as MONTAGNE says, *as it belongs to great poets only to make use of the licences of the art, so it is tolerable only in great and illustrious souls to assume a privilege above the common.* In those extraordinary men great qualities so absorb their defects, that they are hardly discernable. The sun has its spots, but its splendor prevents our seeing them.

Happily for us, singularity is as rare a defect in France, as it is common in England : and it is to be hoped that those who have transplanted this exotic into our soil, will fail of success in propagating it. True it is, that there are reasonable grounds to fear the worst in this regard from the great commerce we entertain at present with this island. Nations more easily exchange their vices than their virtues. Our Petits-maitres in sciences (for there are some of all kinds) very much affect English manners at this day. But it is not in the good part that they imitate them : generally speaking, they have nothing English but their dress. One of our young fellows, after having read mr. ADDISON's spectators, and mr. POPE's works, said one day to a friend : *now I think.* Our thinking entity was cloathed in green, his coat was without a plait, his hair without powder ; and he had his hat on his head. *Well,* continued he, *how do you like me ? Have I not the compleat air of an Englishman ?* Several of our *literati* are already inlisted

inlisted under the English banner: the Geometricians have set them the example. These would have it, that the nation which esteems geometry as the first of sciences, is itself the first nation of Europe. How emphatically they extoll every thing that comes from this country! How zealously they strive to make proselites! If you believe this sort of fanatics, there are no real men but the English: not a step to be made in philosophy or literature without the study of their language: it is, according to them, the key of all sciences: they regard it as the only rich one, the English manner of speaking as the only just one, and their way of living as the only one that is rational. It is not the fault of these gentlemen, that we do not borrow our manner of dress and eating from the Thames watermen.

I could wish that the only marks of distinction from the vulgar, were a more just way of thinking, a more rational conduct, and purer morals.* To abound in his own sense is not a reason for gaining applause, when a man prefers his caprice and particular imaginations to the sentiments of the wise, and the principles of reason. But the English have so high an opinion of their nation, that they glory in the least thing that relates to their manners. They are not afraid to say, that they believe themselves the first people of the world.

F 4.

Let

* *Id agamus, ut meliorem famam sequamur quam vulgus, non ut contrariam. SENECA.*

Let us grant nevertheless, that there are cases, wherein an affectation of singularity may be excusable: it is sometimes necessary to deceive mankind, in order to attain one's end. 'Tis in vain to have merit in the world, it is not sufficient to make a fortune; there must be besides, as the Italians say, *un poco di matto*. When a man has some mixture of the fool, it is the easier for him to distinguish himself from the croud of his competitors. The extraordinary fixes the eyes of the multitude, and the people are always ready to esteem what astonishes them. How rare so ever good sense may be, it has nothing remarkable in it: it is commended, but not sought after. Shining qualities get the better of solid ones. A glaring vice makes more noise than the most essential virtues. In letters, in arms, and in a word in all kinds of life, a little quakery is requisite to gain a reputation. It is easier to succeed with much craft without the least merit, than with a great deal of merit without the least craft. Nothing is so rare as that elevation of soul and courage of mind, which make a man resolve to obtain nothing but by such methods as he may publickly own; and to prefer an honest obscurity to the false lustre of an ill-acquired reputation. There are men, who are determined, at any price, to gain the attention of the public: but those love a great better than a good reputation.

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There are other cases, wherein an air of singularity, either in conduct, or actions, may even dazzle and impose on the wise. You remember, sir, to have read in the *pour et contre*, * the will of that Englishman, who dying without children, appointed *the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, &c.* for his heirs. God forbid I should intend to lessen the value of this good action ; the memory of this charitable man ought to be respected by all good men : yet I have seen some Frenchmen too much astonished at this will, and admire in this stranger what they would but barely approve in a compatriot. After all, what has this Englishman done, but what is daily done among us by those, who leave their substance to hospitals and other poor ! Wherefore it is the form, not the thing, that raises admiration : and indeed, we might never have heard of this will, if this Englishman, instead of employing a text of scripture, had made it in the usual form. How easy it is to deceive us, and how often we take the appearance for the reality !

What I am most surprized at is, that singularity should sometimes be able to tarnish the lustre of royal majesty. LEWIS the eleventh carried it even to the throne, where he was sure of having the whole universe for spectators. In my opinion, historians were in the wrong to impute to nothing but his avarice the

* Tom. 1. pag. 65.

the coarse coat and greasy hat, which he constantly wore. * Our vices always take a tincture of our state of life: a sovereign's avarice is of a different cast from that of the meanest of his subjects. 'Tis very probable that LEWIS the eleventh's motive for wearing such dirty cloaths was to appear singular. He resolved to distinguish himself from other kings, by seeming to disdain the pomp of royal grandeur. It appears also from some other actions of his life, that he took pleasure in running counter to all other monarchs. It cannot be denied at least, that it was for the sake of singularity, that he employ'd his tailor for his herald, his barber for his ambassador, and his physician for his chancellor. The beggarly appearance, so unworthy of a sovereign, which he and his court made at the famous interview he had with HENRY king of Castille, and which only exposed him to the contempt of the Spaniards, was a visible affectation: it was a criticism on the sumptuous dress and all the luxury of the Castillians: but the sordid parcimony, which he opposed to their extravagance, was not perhaps less worthy of blame. However that be, as soon as this prince, who all his life had appeared so ill dressed, retired from the sight of his subjects to his castle of Ples-

* The author of a book intitl'd: *Britannia languens*, London, 1680. computes the treasure and grandeur of this prince by a reckoning in the chamber of accounts at Paris, of three half-pence for liquor to grease his boots. Pag. 211.

Pleffis-les-Tours, his common dress was crimson satin, furred with sable : nay he took pleasure in bestowing the same sort of cloaths on the small number of courtiers, who were near his person. Thus we commonly pass from one extreme to the other : and thus he was equally singular in both cases.

I did not expect, sir, when I began this letter, that it would run to this length. 'Tis the effect of the antipathy I have ever had to singularity. Since it is not permitted in society to pluck off the mask, with which men cover their imperfections, at least let us not suffer ourselves to be imposed on by the arts they use to hide them from us. Let us grant our esteem to those only who deserve it ; and believe that defects are always defects : if there are some, which now and then accompany good qualities, they do not always suppose them. We may find a man of merit who has the little defect of being willing to appear singular : but a much greater number is to be found, who have the same affectation without the least merit.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

LETTER



LETTER XII.

To the Abbé D'OLIVET,

Of the French Academy;

On the English tongue : with a comparison instituted between it and the French.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

YOU desire me to write my thoughts on a language, which other studies have hindered you from applying yourself to. Accustomed to spread beauties and philosophical light on matters purely grammatical, you do not think what difficulty another person finds in handling them; and you do not suspect that the task you lay on me, is above my courage and strength.

If the English had as good works on their language as we have on ours, I should not be so much startled at the undertaking: but they have not so much as a good dictionary; nay they have hardly a tolerable grammar. Mr. DRYDEN should have made his nation sensible how much they wanted both these works, instead of spending ill-timed pleasantries on the dictionary of the French academy, * without which

* Preface to his translation of Virgil's Bucolics.

which we should not perhaps have had others more copious, of which this is the base. Few of the English have applied themselves to the studies requisite for establishing the rules of a grammar, and those who have attempted it are not very sure guides.

I am far from placing among those works of little reflection, a letter of doctor SWIFT, which contains a *Proposal for correcting, improving and ascertaining the English tongue*. This piece has been of great assistance to me, especially in regard to the origin of this language, which I am going to handle, before I communicate some observations I have made on the qualities peculiar to it.

England first peopled by a nation, which spoke the same tongue with the Celts of Gaul, in after-times received new colonies from Gaul itself, who carried with them the names by which they were known in their native country: thus we find even parisiens (*Parisi*) settled here. The Romans subdued but part of this island, and had but a small number of settlements therein. However they introduced the use of the Latin tongue; but excepting the colonies and towns where their garrisons were, the Britons under their subjection spoke but a corrupted jargon made up of the two tongues.

The same thing happened in Gaul, where the vulgar tongue was composed of words chiefly borrowed from the Latin, but made and turned according to the genius of the ancient language of the natives. Of this we have

have an example in the language of Britany in France, wherein most part of the words are French, and not of the ancient British of Wales or Cornwall. Thus the Spanish is composed of Latin, Gothic, Arabic, and a few Iberian or Basque words, generally reduced to the Gothic grammar. The Italian in like manner is blended with the Latin of the Provinces, (for it was a jargon they spoke in the Provinces) the Gothic and the Lombardian.

When the Romans were obliged to recall their legions out of England, in order to defend them against the northern barbarians; the Britons now left to themselves, being too weak to repulse the Picts of Scotland their mortal enemies, called in the Saxons to their assistance. These soon became masters of the greatest part of the island, and established their power, customs and language all together. There are some pretty considerable works still extant in their language. After the Saxons, the Danes having conquer'd England brought in their own, which is a dialect of the Teutonic, very different from the Saxon or Anglo-Saxon. Again the Normans, who were a pack of adventurers from all the nations of the North, after having established themselves in this island, introduced the use of the tongue or jargon they spoke. This jargon received the different dialects promiscuously, without reducing them to any rule. Thus the English tongue has the same origin with the German

German, and all the others spoken in the North. For this reason it is, that the Germans, Swedes, Danes and Dutch pronounce the English with ease: which the Italians, Spaniards and French cannot do. Even at this day most part of the words that express the first ideas are the same in English and all the northern languages.

WILLIAM the conqueror, who put an end to the reign of the Saxons, thought it necessary, in order to strengthen his power in England, to introduce the language as well as laws of his nation. He therefore brought in the use of the French tongue, which was spoken in the provinces situate on the north of the Loire. He dispersed Normans in all the monasteries, to teach it: he ordained that all pleadings and public acts should be written in French: and if his project did not succeed, he was the occasion at least, that the English tongue began from that time to be filled with words taken from ours. We have WILLIAM's laws in the language he published them, and it is a French perhaps less remote from that we now speak, than several works composed in France, even in a later age. Doctor HICKES in his *thesaurus linguarum septentrionalium* has taken notice of a manuscript psalter written in the reign of king STEPHEN, in four columns, Latin, French, Danish and Norman, which furnishes a proof of what I have here said.

The

The French continued a long time the court language; it is still that of the ancient lawyers:

* The English tongue abandoned to the use of the people, was gradually formed by a mixture of all those spoken by people of different origins.

The Domains which WILLIAM's successors held in France, and the conquests they had made there, had established such a correspondence between France and England; that the English of three or four hundred years ago, was more mixed with French, than it now is. And possibly the knowledge of the English of those times may prove very useful to those who would make themselves acquainted with our old French. The perusal of CHAUCER has made me read our old poets with greater ease. Many words are grown obsolete in our language, which enrich that of the English: and they have some of great energy, which are no longer found among us but in the jargon of some of our provinces: in fine they have preserved others, of which we have not the least traces remaining.

You, who are so great a master of our language, do you not find, sir, that the middle of the reign of LEWIS XIV. seems to be the time when it was carried to its greatest perfection? The English language on the contrary began
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* Even at this day the form of passing and giving the royal assent to bills is in French. For public bills, *le roi veut*: for private, *soit fait comme il est désiré*. When the lower house passes a bill, the words are, *les communs ont assenti*, &c.

to degenerate before it rose to that which it might have attain'd. It was under queen ELIZABETH, that it came nearest to it. This language was then by the translation of the bible, enriched with many oriental words and turns of expression. Doctor SWIFT assures us, that, for the style, this translation, as well as the book of common prayer done about the same time, have greater strength and beauty than the best written works of the moderns. Sir WALTER RALEIGH, one of the ministers of that great queen, who herself understood several languages; the celebrated SPENCER, and FAIRFAX, are still reckoned among the best writers of their nation.

The English kept up its credit to the time of the rebellion against CHARLES I. Under CROMWELL the jargon of enthusiasts gained such an ascendant, that it entirely infected the manner of speaking and writing: and if I may be allowed to give my opinion, possibly it feels somewhat of its effects to this day. Soon after, the licentiousness of the reign of CHARLES II. corrupted at the same time the language and morals of the nation. In this vicious and polite court, wit and libertinism bore equal sway. The writers of that time, copying after the court, were not exact, either as to morals or style. On one hand they shook off the yoke of decency, on the other they made a sacrifice of judgment to wit, that is, to bad taste: for affected or ill-timed

wit is really a fault. COWLEY sparkles with wit *, the earl of ROCHESTER has no respect for modesty. The wise WALLER is perhaps the only one, who preserved himself from both these contagions.

The prince of Orange, and the elector of Hanover, who since that time came to the throne of Great-Britain, must have retarded the progress of a language, to which they were strangers. 'Tis the court that gives out the fashions in all countries: in that of those princes German or French were more spoken than English.

In fine, it is thought, that since the reign of CHARLES I. the English tongue has acquired but some *affected phrases and new conceited words*, which it stood in little or no need of; while it has lost much of its strength and native beauty. May I presume to make one reflection here, which unhappily is but too well grounded? 'Tis not the fault of some writers of our age, that the same thing has not happened among us: for they seem to use their utmost endeavours to corrupt our language. They run after wit, like the authors of CHARLES II's reign. *They are*, as MONTAGNE says of those of his time, *audacious and*

* This COWLEY, who, as DRYDEN says, *had a greater share of wit than any man he ever knew*, has extremely ill followed the wise advice he gave to others. He says in his ode of wit:

Yet 'tis not to adorn and gild each part,
That shews more cost and art.
Jewels at nose and lips but ill appear;
Rather than *all things wit*, let none be there.

and disdainful enough, not to follow the common road: but are lost for want of invention and discretion. There is nothing to be seen in them but a wretched affectation of strangeness: cold and absurd disguisings, which instead of raising sink the subject. If they can but gorge in novelty, they have no regard to efficacy. In order to seize a new word, they quit the common one, which is frequently stronger and more nervous.

With respect to the English, that spoken at present is still very expressive, but yet I doubt it is not an absolutely finished language: if ever it comes to be polished, it will undergo the same fate as ours: it will lose its strength in proportion as it acquires smoothness. The language which the English speak at this day, is full of such harsh sounds, *that*, as one of their authors says, *none but a Northern ear can endure it.* MILTON has complained of the same defect in his time. He likewise says that as the English live in a cold climate, they cannot open their mouths sufficiently to pronounce the Southern languages gracefully; and that generally speaking, they articulate every sound with the mouth a little closed. It should seem as if the same sun, which gives more fragancy to flowers and more taste to fruits, gives likewise nicer organs and more delicate sensations to men. In Italy a peasant has a just ear: poetry and music are familiar there to people of all ranks. An Arabian girl speaks politely, and in verse too, with her pitcher on her head.

In this respect, perhaps the temperature of the air has not less influence on brute animals than on men. Cold and heat may occasion the same difference in the nightingale's notes, as is found in our manner of articulating sounds. *It is observed, says mr. ADDISON, that several of the singing birds of our own country learn to sweeten their voices, and mellow the harshness of their natural notes, by practising under those that come from warmer climates*.*

As the abundance of consonants makes the French harsher than the Italian, the same reason renders the English much more so than the French. You, sir, who are so perfect a master of the learned languages, are sensible of the advantage they have over those now spoken in Europe. You likewise know, that all languages, ancient and modern, have always been indebted to the poets for their politeness, and more especially for their smoothness. As the first verses were made only to be sung, they were obliged to avoid the meeting of syllables of difficult pronunciation, and to retrench from many words such consonants as were too rough. What they did at first purely to give more harmony to their verse, was afterwards adopted by custom, and contributed to embellish the whole language, in which they made those changes.

This MALHERBE did among us. We had poets before him, but he is the first that studied harmony. On the contrary, the English poets,

* Spect. vol. I. no. 29.

poets, and especially those of CHARLES II's reign, have taken the liberty to abbreviate words, in order to save time and pains, tho' their language was already overstock'd with harsh sounds. If they happen not to hit the measure of their verse, an *e* is immediately retrenched, and thus three consonants are left together, which 'tis almost impossible to bring into one syllable. Such are these words, *wish'd, walk'd, drudg'd. Their taste, says doctor SWIFT, in time became so depraved, that what was at first a poetical licence, they made their choice, alledging that the words pronounced at length, sounded faint and languid; tho' in reality these sounds, even to the ear of an English Connoisseur, are more unharmonious and barbarous than the others were languid and faint. This is what renders the declamation of the English stage so dragging: sometimes the actor is compelled to it by the harshness of the words, which he finds a difficulty to pronounce; at other times he lengthens those whose pronunciation is more easy, and thinks thus the better to express the passion. CIBBER, a player who has acquired great reputation on the London stage, and who has seen BARON act on ours, told me that he was extremely disgusted at the swiftness, with which we speak the verses in tragical performances. On the contrary, a Frenchman is shock'd at the languid declamation of the English: which is the more surprizing, as strangers always complain of the rapidity in pronouncing*

nouncing a language they are little acquainted with. And that of the English stage must be very languid, if it seems so to us. And indeed we find it quite contrary to nature, which the English pretend to imitate as well as we. But in this respect it is not the same every where: those sounds which move us to compassion would perhaps make a Chinese laugh. M. DE MOIVRE, who speaks as freely and well of CORNEILLE and RACINE, as of LEIBNITZ and NEWTON, told me that the same CIBBER happening one day to be joaking on our tragical declamation, he made him sensible that that of the English was but a constant repetition of the doleful cry of their watchmen; and that he remember'd to have heard CIBBER himself speak the best verse in ADDISON'S CATO in the tone of: *past twelve o'clock, a cloudy morning.*

Able grammarians have remarked, that the Hebrew, and all other languages that have not been refined, retain too great a number of monosyllables. The English has this defect in common with all the tongues derived from the Saxon. As to the inclination of the English to shorten words, mr. ADDISON gives a reason for it, which has perhaps more of shew than of truth in it. He pretends that this proceeds from the aversion his countrymen have to talking too much. But yet the English authors, except those who treat of the demonstrative sciences, do not appear to me to have this fear of saying too much before their eyes.
The

The Lacedemonians, on whom this praise is bestowed, did not distinguish themselves by the brevity of words but of discourses. Notwithstanding the respect I bear to this illustrious writer, I think that what he has said on this subject shews the high opinion he has of the English, more than a serious examination of the defects of their language. According to him they are all owing to what constitutes the English character, *viz.* modesty, reflection and sincerity. A less prejudiced critic, tho' perhaps somewhat too severe, reproaches his countrymen with the bad habit of shortening words as a tendency to relapse into the barbarity of their northern ancestors. The most judicious of the English grant that their language has these defects only for want of being polished, as the Italian, Spanish and French. At least if it be true that monosyllables, so frequent in the English, are a proof of their love of taciturnity and reflection; those that are in the German, Swedish, and other Northern languages, prove the same thing in favour of the people who speak them: and yet I doubt if the English would willingly allow so many nations to share in an *Encomium*, which they believe to be due to them alone.

As they are accustomed to borrow expressions from all languages, their own is very copious. From our word *humeur*, the English have made *humour*: but they have given it a quite different signification from what it has in

French. The word *bumeur* taken absolutely in our tongue, conveys an idea of sadness and discontent: *avoir de l'humeur*, is to be dissatisfied. That of *humour* on the contrary, expresses the idea of singular and perhaps somewhat foolish joy. *Humour*, says one of their authors, *is the ridiculous extravagance of conversation, by which one man differs from all others*. 'Tis some odd habit, passion or affection, peculiar to one person. But this is not the only sense, which this very familiar word bears in their language: it is as much made use of to express a witty work, as the character of a person; and in both cases always signifies a certain turn of pleasantry, which is not too near the natural strain, and yet is not entirely opposite to it. A man who has *humour*, is one that is at the same time pleasant and singular: such was monsieur DU FRESNI, whom you have known. His whim of ordering a soup of whey and fresh eggs to be served at an entertainment he gave, and which cost him dear, would have passed with the English for a piece of *humour*. They say, a work is full of it, when an uncommon pleasantry runs through the whole. Such is RABELAIS's works, and those of dean SWIFT, who tho' but his scholar, may be called the English RABELAIS. The comic of MOLIERE is too natural for the English to find what they call *humour* in it. His pieces in this respect are in the same case with those of the ancients, whom DRYDEN reproaches
for

for not having known this sort of pleasantry: this author would have been better pleased with the comedies of DU FRESNI, because they are more in the style of the English stage. His dialogue is exact without being natural. His wit is studied without being affected. He says good things, but not as another would say them. All his pleasantry has an original turn. *Dom Japhet d'Armenie*, *la Fille Capitaine*, and some others of our old pieces, have likewise a good deal of this sort of pleasantry, which is so much in the taste of our neighbours.

Thus tho' the English regard *humour* as a gift bestowed on their nation only, and unknown to all others; if we have not the expression, we have the thing it signifies: and if it is not so common among us, if there is less *humour* in our writings and characters, this might happen because we do not esteem it as much as they. It is because taste is more common in France, that our authors write more naturally: and it is because our countrymen have a greater regard to decency, that they live in a more uniform manner. And what do we lose thereby, but some whimsical writers in literature, and some buffoons in society?

The English on their side want a word, of which I wish they were less acquainted with the idea. Would you believe it, sir? 'Tis a word to express the French *ennui*. They have but periphrases and feeble substitutes for it.
They

They better express the *tædium vitæ*, *l'ennui de la vie*, by the desperate resolutions they take, when tired of life, than by any term in their language. A person who neither knew their character, nor way of living, and had no other knowledge of their tongue but from books, not finding a word that expresses *ennui*, would imagine that England is the only country where this distemper of the mind is not known; just as one is tempted to believe that a nation is not acquainted with theft, if the language does not furnish a term to express the idea thereof. But certainly whoever would be of this opinion, would be hugely mistaken. How comes it to pass that the English, who have borrowed so many words from our language without necessity, have not received this, which so well expresses a thing they feel every moment, and which has not less influence on their temperament than on their character? The *spleen* or vapours, and even the consumption, are perhaps nothing else but the *ennui* carried to its highest pitch, and become a dangerous, and sometimes a mortal disease.

What I have said of the English wanting an exact term to express a sentiment so common among them, is the more remarkable, because they have very strong words, and in great plenty, for all the other affections of the soul. The language of a people is a sort of mirror that shews them. That of the English, whose passions are violent, is equally copious and pathetic, to characterize the different motions

tions of the heart. There is not a language perhaps, that expresses the sentiments of love with greater vivacity, those of Friendship with more warmth, the dejection from grief with more bitterness, and the outrageousness of despair with more strength: but the English tongue, rich as it is in painting the affections of the heart and actions of the body, is very poor in terms that relate to the productions of the mind, and the knowledge of the Belles-lettres, liberal arts, and all the objects of taste and amusement. The English cannot treat of these subjects without borrowing from their neighbours not only single words, but sometimes whole phrases. When they would express a lover of painting, music, &c. they use the term *virtuoso*, taken from the Italians: but as loving and knowing them are two very different things, and which either here or elsewhere do not always go together, they are obliged to employ the French word *connoisseur* to characterize a judge in them. The same may be said of the word *curieux* and several others. Some of their authors, who have writ on these subjects, have made use of so many French phrases, that, for fear of being suspected of affectation, they have declared that necessity compelled them to it. The reason why their tongue is not as rich as others in this respect, seems to me to be that given by one of their most judicious critics, the earl of SHAFTESBURY. *To whatever politeness,* says he, *we may suppose ourselves already arrived,*

*rived, we must confess, that we were the latest barbarous, and the last civilized or polish'd people of Europe.**

I will enter into no particulars relating to grammar : that subject would carry me too far, nor did I engage to handle it. I will only remark, that what most distinguishes the English from the French and other tongues formed from the Latin, as the Italian and Spanish ; is, that in the English, as well as in the German, the adjectives have neither number nor gender, and the substances are all of the same gender, except those which express man and woman, and the male and female of the most common animals. 'Tis the same in the Breton and Irish tongues ; the articles and pronouns have genders, but the adjectives none.

The advantages, which the English possibly has over our tongue, are energy, copiousness, and great freedom : those peculiar to the French are clearness, order, and politeness. Direct construction, that it is to say, order is the source of the clearness of the French : it is indeed exposed thereby to fall into sameness of sounds, rhymes and verses ; but the ambiguity which transpositions throw on discourse, is perhaps a greater defect.

Those who pretend that transpositions do honour to the Latin, will give the English tongue the preference over the French. But the best critics of antiquity agree, that it is a
perfect-

* Charact. Vol. 3. p. 151.

perfection in a speech to place the words in the natural order. BOUHOURS says, that the emperor CHARLES V. who could speak and write our language equally well, held it in high esteem, and thought it fit for great affairs : and according to cardinal DU PERRON, he was wont to call it the language of state. The event has justified his conjectures : it is become the language of politics, and of all the negotiations of Europe.

DRYDEN, who said that the French are so good critics only because they are bad poets ; and that they busy themselves so much about the rules of grammar, only because they want that genius which disdains trifles : this same DRYDEN, I say, gives us in another place a very singular idea of the incertainty and disorder, out of which neither he nor so many other celebrated writers have been able to extricate the English tongue. *I am often put to a stand, says he, in considering whether what I write be the idiom of the tongue, or false grammar, and nonsense couch'd beneath that specious name of ANGLICISM : and have no other way to clear my doubts, but by translating my English into Latin, and thereby trying what sense the words will bear in a more stable language. I am desirous, if it were possible, that we might all write with the same certainty of words, and purity of phrase, to which the Italians first arrived, and after them the French.**

As

* Dryden's epistle dedicatory to *Troilus and Cressida*.

As to politeness in language, many look on it as somewhat chimerical. They suppose that the lofty and low styles always depend on the subjects, and on the person who handles them : but perhaps they are mistaken. The politeness of a language consists in ways of speaking different from those of the common people, but yet without affectation. A language will be more or less polite, in proportion as it affords a greater or lesser number of expressions, which are neither affected nor vulgar. FATHER COLLADO says, that the Japanese, who all speak the same tongue, have nevertheless two languages really different : one reserved for noble uses, the other for common and familiar discourse. * In their tongue every thing has two names, one of esteem, another of contempt. This politeness in the language partakes of the manners of the nation. In France, we avoid nothing more than speaking like the common people : on the contrary, in England they affect it ; because there is an interest in pleasing them, which cannot take place among us. The nature of a government has an influence on all things. In Spain, where the common sort believe they compose a part of the nobility, they imitate their grandees in language and gravity.

By the works you have published in French, you have proved, sir, that nobody is better
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* Japanese grammar and dictionary printed at Rome.

acquainted with the beauties of Greek and Latin, from which the polite languages spoken at present in Europe are derived. The French has been reproached with variations: I have spoke of those which the English has undergone; and you know that the Latin has changed more than ours in the same space of time. In fine, m. CHARPENTIER, an ancient member of your academy, in his book on the excellence of the French tongue, says, that by applying to it the maxims, which the philosophers and rhetoricians have given us to know in what consists the beauty of elocution in general, it appears that the French is one of those that come nearest to the idea of a perfect language. In this point I shall abide by your decision, fully satisfied that there is not a better judge in France. In order to compare different languages together, it is not sufficient to know the rules of each, 'tis likewise requisite to be sensible of their beauties. It is not sufficient to know the words, one must be endowed with that philosophical turn of mind, that connects all the sciences, and without which there is no excelling in any. 'Tis for want of this turn of mind that we have as few good grammarians, as persons capable of distinguishing all the merit of such as are.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

L E T-



L E T T E R XIII.

To Monsieur DE BUFFONS;

*On the magnificence affected by the English in
their funerals.*

LONDON, &c.

S I R,

THE pleasure I find in conversing with my friends makes me neglect nothing that may contribute to my observations; and chance frequently rewards me for the small care I take: for I cannot walk many steps without finding matter for reflection. We ought not to despise any detail that may lead us to the knowledge of a people. If now I purpose to give you an account of some religious ceremonies of our neighbours, I entirely lay aside the relation they may have to divine worship; and confine myself to examine them as they tend to characterise their morals. As much as we ought to respect what religion has made sacred, so much we are permitted to laugh at whatever the folly and vanity of men have blended with the most holy practices.

Is it not astonishing, that in so sensible a nation as this so little formalities are used in the celebration of marriage, the most important act of life; and that so much is observed
in

in burials, a ceremony which ought to be of the least importance both to the living and the dead. Burials in England are real funeral pomps: were it not for the black colour affected in them, they would sometimes be very curious sights. The English, after the example of the Chinese and ancient Romans, make it a point of honour to render their funerals as magnificent as they can: you commonly see coaches and fix not only at those of the nobility, but also at those of the common people. The lowest tradesman must have two or three at his burial, and other conditions of life in proportion. And now and then the mourners have entertainments prepared for them, which make part of the ceremony (as was the custom in Rome) and banish all grief. They are also presented with mourning rings adorned with inscriptions, hersees, skeletons, &c. and so artfully wrought and enamelled, that in foreign countries, whither they are exported, they are often worn as very elegant rings.

Nothing is more common in London and all over England than neat well-stocked shops and warehouses of undertakers. Several dealers make estates by this trade. Like the ancient *Libitinarii* of Rome, they sell and furnish every thing necessary for the funeral ceremony. 'Tis very amusing to see the genteelness and variety of their signs. They have coffins of all sorts and all colours, to suit the taste and vanity of those who choose to be buried: they expose them in their shops, as if

their design was to tempt such passengers as may happen to be tired of life.

A certain person, who made the public good his study, did a signal piece of service to his countrymen in this way. As the sculptors of London have no invention, he ordered great variety of designs of sepulchral monuments to be made by the best masters in Italy and France, and particularly by the famous mr. BOUCHER ; where every body may choose one according to his circumstances and taste, and have the pleasure of seeing it executed in his life time : which may be a proper employment for the passion old men have for building.

There is a sort of satisfaction in dying in England, which is little known out of it. He who has lived in the most abject state, is sure of making a shining figure at his burial. This makes a pleasing point of view for the self-love of the living. He knows little of mankind, who cannot conceive that such silly ideas have an effect on them. Some there are who spend their lives in contriving what may make them be talked of on the day of their death. There are curious persons, who collect pictures with the sole view of making a noise at the sale of them for the benefit of their heirs. At that of Mr. DELA FAYE, who had a good collection, I have heard one of these *Virtuosi* say : *my collection will make a much finer figure.*

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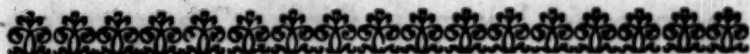
The care the English take of all the particulars of their burial, would make one believe they find more pleasure in dying than living. He who has lived the most obscurely in the world, seems to affect to go out of it in a blaze. His funeral must have the air of a triumph. People here are as fond of pomp in their funeral cavalcades, as they are studious to avoid luxury in dress. The great expences they are at, are always burthensome to the heirs. Among the common sort, their sumptuous burials eat up the whole inheritance. In France, all is bestowed on ornament; a son ruins his father by his extravagance in cloaths and equipages: here on the contrary, fathers frequently ruin their children at their death, by the expence of their funerals. A person who has walked all his life on foot, must be carried to his grave in a coach and six.

What a strange sort of ambition is this! But such is the vanity of men, that the lowest of them cannot consent to be thought an indifferent entity to the community: at the fatal instant that snatches him away, his thoughts are actually employ'd how to make his survivors take notice of him. Self-love is inherent to all ages and conditions: as it is born with man, it does not die before him. All our actions, upon a close inspection, are but a web of insignificancies and follies: our whole life is so odd a comedy, that the very unravelling of its plot often makes the specta-

tors laugh. Our manner of quitting the world is generally as ridiculous as our manner of living in it.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



L E T T E R X I V .

To the Marquis D E G * * * ;

Containing observations on the political constitution of England: with a disquisition on the best form of government.

LONDON, &c.

M Y L O R D ,

WHAT does your lordship think of the constitution of the English government, who have so narrowly examined it, and are gifted with that superior reason, which forms a sound judgment, not only of men and their passions, but also of their true interests, and of the surest means for attaining them.

The English pretend that their government, which they derive from the old Saxons, supports liberty better than any republic: and that, without being exposed to the danger of arbitrary power, it has all the advantages
essential

essential to monarchy. This indeed is a plan becoming their wisdom. A mixt government composed of the monarchical, aristocratical and democratical, in such a manner that each part of the legislature is a counterballance to the others, seems to be the best of all kinds. But one of the greatest politicians of antiquity, TACITUS, says that such a governour can subsist only in idea; and that it is either impossible to establish it; or if that be compassed, it cannot long subsist *. May not this possibly be the fate with which that of England is threatened, by the continual disturbances it meets with. The parliament has not always had the same authority. Without looking farther back, HENRY VIII. did not reign over this nation much less despotically than FRANCIS I. over ours. He excluded the issue of JAMES IV. of Scotland from the throne: and the parliament confirmed his will. *In his reign, says an English author, the voice of the law was but the echo of the voice of the king.* And any one may imagine how far he stretched his power, from his daring to meddle with religion.

The political constitution of England appears indeed to have all the perfections of a republic without any of its defects: sir WILLIAM TEMPLE says, it remedies the vice of the Roman republic, the most famous of all.

H 3

Here

* Cunctas nationes et urbes populus aut priores aut singuli regunt. Delecta ex his & constituta reipublicae forma laudari facilius quam evenire, vel si evenit, haud diuturna esse potest.

Here we do not see the commons in perpetual wars with the lords; but does not a jealousy subsist between the king and his people? And is it not as dangerous as the other? BAYLE has made this remark: *to set bounds to regal authority, is the means of inspiring the prince with a desire of attaining arbitrary power.*

Great men may have different interests, difficult to be reconciled: on the contrary a king has always the same, and tends more constantly to his ends than a body composed of many members, who seldom act in concert. The poise cannot long subsist: the king's power will be daily increasing; the free concessions of the parliament add every day new degrees to the sovereign's authority; and the ballance begins already to incline to his side. Suppose that some time or other different enterprizing princes should take it into their heads to abuse their power; I foresee under each of them a war kindled between the king and his people. And what must be the event at last? That one of the parties will crush the other, and that the mixt government will sooner or later be succeeded either by a true republic, or an absolute monarchy: such as the most part of the others in Europe. Under CROMWELL, regal authority had been abolished, if he had not secretly aspired to it. CHARLES II. on his restoration, might have rendered it independent, if he knew how to make a proper advantage of the circumstances of the times. Through a scandalous abuse of
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the liberty which reigns in England, a certain writer of this nation has calculated how long the christian religion will subsist here. I am of opinion, that a computation of the period of their government would have been easier and shorter.

Of what avail are laws, which it is almost impossible to put in practice? And how should they be observed by those whose interest it is to violate them, and who may infringe them with impunity! The acts which were intended to secure the freedom of elections, and the independency of parliaments, the two most essential articles of English liberties, have but introduced new abuses, instead of suppressing old ones. Men seek their private advantage in all things: and the master-piece of policy is, to make them find it in the execution of the law. May it not be said that there is a perpetual misunderstanding here between the king and people: that the fire is sometimes covered under the ashes; but as it is never entirely quenched, a general combustion is always to be feared.

Tho' the king of England can do no wrong, yet as all grants depend on him, his power must diminish that of the parliament. The Roman commonwealth was scarce formed, when the people perceived that they were to be subjugated by the great men, if they remained masters of all grants. They took care to have justice done them, and no longer suffered the senators to have the sole right of

disposing of all state employments. They even compelled them in course of time to allow their tribunes the same honours with the consuls.

In England the king, lords and commons equally share the legislative power: but the court, on which all places and dignities depend, thereby keeps the lords in awe; and has other means of gaining over the representatives of the people. The avarice of some may be tempted, and the self-love of others seduced. He who guards against the snare of riches, suffers himself to be dazzled by the splendor of honours. It is perhaps more difficult to resist seduction than open tyranny. Force is opposed to force: to the allurements of riches and grandeur, what can be opposed but the buckler of virtue? But how many men are too weak to use it! While those who hold places, pensions, and honours from the king, are allowed to sit in the house of commons, most probably it will be always dependent on the court. These ways open to a minister to secure a plurality of votes, are indirect means to prevent their freedom.

How came the Romans to carry patriotism to so great a height? 'Tis because that virtue could raise them to the first employments of the commonwealth: thereby a plebian became a tribune, and a senator obtained the consulship. But you will agree with me, sir, that zeal for the public good is not here the shortest way to dignities. When a seat is to be

be filled in the house of commons, he who spends most money at the election, will frequently be preferred before him, who is better able to serve his country.

If it be an inconvenience in the English government, that the power of making war, and that of raising money which is the sinews of it, are not in the same hand; it is compensated by the benefit resulting to the people, that it thereby becomes more difficult to engage in burthensome wars.

An island seems made for commerce, and the inhabitants should rather think of defending themselves, than making conquests on the continent. They would find too great difficulty in keeping them, on account of the distance, and the hazards of the sea. A trading nation should never make war, but in order to protect its trade. In several respects, the nature of the English government entirely agrees both with the situation of the country and the temper of the inhabitants. It is nevertheless to be remarked, that as the king and people here seem to have separate interests; as much as war is fatal to the nation by destroying commerce, so much it is advantageous to the sovereign by encreasing his power. He then obtains all he asks, the most opposite parties unite to support the common cause. It is no wonder that the kings of England become parties concerned in all the wars of Europe: in so doing they only follow their personal interest. They are never so powerful at home,

home, as when they employ the natural inquietude of their subjects abroad. In general, both the advantages and inconveniencies of the English government are so considerable, that it is difficult to determine to which side the ballance leans. The people are really richer here than any where else; and they partly at least owe this advantage to the wisdom of their laws. But amidst all this abundance, the nation is so disunited and rent by continual factions, that it seems every moment to be threatened with the horrors of civil wars. Those factions, libels, and mistrusts instilled into the people, are buds of anarchy, whose evil fruit soon or late grows to maturity.

It is a problem proposed by all politicians, to determine which of the two governments is preferable, that of a single person, or that of several: and probably it will remain a long time undecided. The judges on each side are too much prejudiced to make us abide by their opinions. But I should think, that the most perfect government is that, the administration of which is the most easy; and wherein order once established is the most exactly kept up: that wherein the subordination, that ought to subsist between those who are chosen to rule, and those who are made to obey, is best observed; and where the laws are most respected, which secure the tranquillity of the state. This, in my opinion, is what is found oftener in states which have but one chief, than in those that have many. But perhaps in reality
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the best government is neither monarchy, nor republic; but that, whether monarchy or republic, whose chiefs have the most probity and virtue.

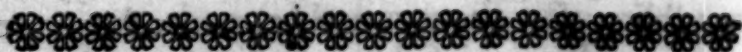
It is customary to compare the body politic to the human body. In pursuance of this idea, if we look on an uneven constitution of body as a bad one, we may suspect a radical vice in the constitution of a state, which is subject to frequent alterations. A man tortured by a continual fever with exacerbations, to me appears the image of the English government, constantly disturbed by parties, and frequently altered by revolutions. Even at present it seems to be in a sort of crisis. If it be true, that this government is one of the most perfect ever invented; does not this truth redound to the shame of human wisdom! It is doubted whether this wisdom has had better success than that chance, which established pure and simple monarchies in other places.

I have the honour to be,

My lord,

Your lordship's most humble, &c.

LETTER



LETTER XV.

To Monsieur H***;

On the extravagancy of the English taste for things merely odd and extraordinary.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

IF any thing could persuade me that the singularity, the English boast of, is natural to them, it would be, that in matters of taste it is what affects from the most. In sciences as well as in arts, the greatest part of their productions are impressed with this seal. They have several works, which they esteem, and which have no other merit.

In all countries the greatest number of mankind take delight in the representation of extraordinary things. They seem to know no agreeable sensations, but such as are strong; their organs are not delicate enough to be affected with graceful objects; and in order to please them, they must be astonished. How many are there, who prefer the tricks of a tumbler that ventures his life on a rope, to the noble and graceful dancing of DUPRE'; and who do not suspect that their pleasure arises only from the notion of the danger he incurs.

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If the common people are every where struck with the singular; none are more in love with it than the English. Those two ridiculous gigantic figures, which stand in the Guild-hall of London, and seem to have been put up there purely to fright children; and that indecent representation of one of their kings, which is to be seen in the Tower of London, are a kind of public advertisements of the nation's genius. In England rarity supplies the place of beauty: and any man is sure of success, if he lets the public know that he is extraordinary. The Grand THOMAS *, to make his fortune, should quit the Pont-neuf, and set up at Charing-cross. Several of his trade have enriched themselves in London, whose hats and feathers were not near so large, nor their inventions so fruitful in attracting the eyes of the mob.

In France we do not take notice even of those, who distinguish themselves by some laudable singularities. There died last year at Paris a shoemaker, who had collected so well-chosen a library, that after his death it sold by auction for near two thousand crowns: yet this circumstance did not make his name better known. If the like thing had happened in London, the news-papers and journals of all kinds would have recorded it; and the students of the two universities would have composed encomiastic verses to his memory.

Such

* A tooth-drawer at Paris, who leaves our Rock far behind him in the race of quackery.

Such is the English taste for things merely extraordinary, that they had rather see the picture of an old man, who had lived upwards of a hundred years useless and obscure, than one of the duke of MARLBOROUGH, who has done such signal services to the nation. A wealthy Englishman will have an ale-house woman painted and engraved at his own expence, who has rendered herself illustrious by her impudence and dexterity in boxing: and the print of a game-keeper, whose sole merit lies in his carbuncled face, will be a match for that of FARINELLI. In fine many people would rather possess the drawing and dimensions of an old tree * three quarters rotten, but thro' which a coach and six can drive; than the most agreeable landskips of PAUL BRILL, or CLAUD LORRAIN.

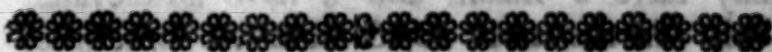
In general, the English are less struck with the beautiful and true, than with the extraordinary and fantastic. Their writers, like their artists, study more to imagine something whimsical, than any thing graceful. And to come to the moral; excepting the essential virtues, which are the same in all nations, it appears to me that in civil life people here value themselves more upon being singular than rational.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

L E T T E R

* This tree stands in a park of the duke of Norfolk in Nottinghamshire.



LETTER XVI.

To Monsieur DE BUFFONS;

Containing remarks on the condition of servants in general; the mercenariness and other defects of the English servants; the expence of dining at great houses; and the custom of the English, especially in the country, of not letting their visitors depart till they and their servants are equally drunk.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

IT is no wonder that there are so many French servants in England. At London our language, customs and manners are much in vogue. These servants contribute at least towards keeping those they serve in the constant exercise of them: and the English pay them in proportion to their utility.

I know nothing contemptible but vice. We ought to take more or less notice of men according to their rank in the world: but there is no degree of them, that should be so little esteemed, as to scorn to know it. The difference existing between the various conditions of life, is not always perceptible between those who are placed in them. A grandee
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may have a mean, and a slave an elevated soul. In the most abject state we sometimes find certain strokes, which do the greatest honour to human nature. Rome has had slaves, whom she was compelled to rank among her heroes.

You are too much a philosopher, for me to fear entering with you into some detail on this sort of men, who have the misfortune to be obliged, in some measure, to sell themselves to others, and are commonly called domestics. Their manners may contribute towards knowing a nation: the general way of thinking influences all conditions. One may safely say, that domestics have all the defects of the lower people by education, and all those of their masters by example.

Domestics are a sort of men, who, by a necessary consequence of well regulated societies, are destined to live in dependence on those, of whom they stand in need. The English, to whom all dependence is insupportable, are very unfit to fulfill the duties of this subordinate state. They are as bad servants, as they are good masters. Possibly the contrary may be said of us: and unhappily this would not redound to our praise.

The only virtue pretty commonly found in English servants, is one of those peculiar to this nation, I mean cleanliness. As to the rest, they have an awkward air, and uncouth behaviour in every thing they do. Besides, they have a certain pride, which it would be happier

pier not to know in their state: as it must necessarily encrease the weight of their yoke. It is a fault they are charged with; and yet it may possibly be but the natural result of the haughty character of the nation. But what we call haughtiness perhaps appears to them to be only a nobleness or elevation of soul.

The English are the people, who least submit to the inconveniences of all societies. On this head they fall into a kind of contradiction. They love order, and yet cannot bear police, which is its support. They are sensible how necessary it is, that the laws should be revered, and yet make no efforts towards curbing licentiousness. They will have a king, on condition almost of not obeying him. In a word, commands astonish them, even in the lowest of all conditions. Is this a vice or a virtue? Is it the effect of their love of liberty, or that of a haughtiness which cannot brook with bending?

The English servants have another defect, which is so general that it constitutes a part of their character, and that is to be extremely mercenary. They are equally faulty by their love of money and their vanity. The first of those vices renders them as mean, as the other sometimes makes them impertinent.

I must not, sir, leave you unacquainted with a custom, which I believe to be peculiar to England. Wherever a person goes to dine, whether in town or in the country, he must give money to every one of the servants; and
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that more or less according to his own rank and the rank of the person he dines with. They have laid people of all conditions under contribution ; and we may bring ourselves to bear it, if we knew the several rates. We easily perceive that it is not just to treat the butler of a peer of the realm like that of a sheriff of a small corporation ; but how to settle the distinction to be made between those of a duke, an earl, and a baron ? These are things that probably are not to be learnt without being very conversant in the world. GEMELLI CARRERI remarks in his account of China, that there is a custom religiously observed in that country at the end of a repast, *which no other nation will approve* ; that is, that each guest leave nine or ten pieces of eight, more or less according to his quality, in the hands of a domestic ; and thus wherever a person goes, he pays for the wine he drinks. They have no suspicion, that our neighbours do the same thing. It is singular to find such foreign customs so near us. If those, who travel the world over, knew Europe better, they would be the less surprized at what they observe out of it. We have forests peopled with Arabs, all but the beard : nay we have even our *Iroquois's* and *Topinambou's*.

However that be, in England at your leaving the house where you have dined, you find all the servants drawn up in the passage like a file of musketteers, from the house-steward down to the lowest livery servant, and each

each of them holds out his hand to you in as deliberate a manner, as the servants in our inns do on the like occasion. And this is the only action, in which the English servants seem to have a polite air. While you are distributing your bounty, the master of the house, who waits on you to the door, turns his head aside at each time, as if he blushed to see you pay for your meal. And probably the Chinese have the same modesty in this respect.

I cannot say, whether this custom is more expressive of the generosity of the masters, or of the sordid mercenary souls of the servants. It proves at least, that the English do not live so much with one another, as we do among ourselves. The day they visit seems a festival to their domestics: they lay out the sideboard with all the plate and rich things of the house: and it is for the extraordinary pains they take, that they have laid on this sort of tax we speak of.

There is not a man of sense here, who does not perceive the inconveniencies of this custom: but it is an old one, and as such universally observed. Several persons of the first rank have in vain attempted to abolish it: they have all miscarried. This people who pique themselves so much of being philosophers, are nevertheless the most tenacious of ancient customs. They think very differently from what they did in former times, but they still live in the same manner.

Moreover those who have a number of servants, and who consequently set the fashion, have too much interest in preserving this custom: it often supplies the place of their servants wages. But it is not more favourable to them than burthensome to people of moderate fortunes, who have the madness to keep company with great men. They are sometimes obliged to purchase that honour dearer than it deserves. One day that the duke of R * * reproached the celebrated M. de M * * for not coming to take a dinner with him; he answered: *my lord, your grace must have the goodness to excuse me; I am not rich enough to have that honour often.*

If the English domestics are mercenary, it must also be allowed that they have gratitude. In order to give you a proof of it in town, as you are leaving their master's house, they call your people aloud, and pronounce your name with an emphasis. Their tone more or less raised, expresses the degree of your generosity and of their acknowledgment. Nay sometimes, in hopes of being paid for it, they bestow titles on a person, which he has no right to. And 'tis they probably, that introduced the custom in England of dubbing a captain with the title of colonel, and an apothecary with that of doctor. There are people, as ridiculous as the *Bourgeois gentilhomme*, who are silly enough to be flattered with titles they have no claim to, and to buy that of *my lord* very dear.

In

In the country the servants of the gentleman where you have dined, have acquired a previous right to your liberality. They have made all your servants drunk : and it is in this point that they execute their master's orders with the most scrupulous punctuality : for those orders are very precise. When a person receives a visit in the country, if he knows the world, he must not let his visitor depart, till both the master and servants are equally fuddled. They seldom let the coachman mount his box, till he is not able to keep his seat : and for all this they expect to have their day of revenge. In inferiors it is a token of respect towards their superiors ; and in these a testimony of good-nature to those below them : in a word, it is one of the essential articles of English civility. And here likewise the politeness of the Chinese agrees with that of the English : in China they think they have not given a good dinner, unless the guests are all drunk at breaking up.

The greatest inconvenience of this custom is, that it encourages a vice in servants, to which the lower people are but too much inclined, and which disables them from serving their masters at a time when they stand most in need of their help. But in this case the English are more indulgent than we are ; perhaps because they better know how far human frailty goes in this respect. The faults which men pardon the most easily, are those, to which

I 3 they

they perceive their own inclinations lead them.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



L E T T E R XVII.

To the Abbé D'OLIVET;

On English versification.

LONDON, &c.

S I R,

I Have read your remarks on RACINE with much pleasure : this small work shews the justness of your taste, the sagacity of your judgment, and the great knowledge you have of our language. You do not criticise him as a grammarian only, but likewise as a philosopher. Your treatise of the French prosody is an excellent performance in its kind. You have the glory of being the first writer among us on a subject, which is of equal utility to all sorts of authors. You have even convinced us, that the prose of our tongue is susceptible of certain numbers, and has its harmony as well as the verse. Those who have an ear cannot read your translations without perceiving that you yourself have given examples of what you teach others : you have as much as pos-

possible imitated the numbers and cadence of CICERO's prose. Not content with having made a beginning by breaking ground, you have most exactly mark'd out the road for penetrating farther. What obligations have not our writers of all kinds to you ! For my part, sir, I should be glad to have it in my power to repay you the pleasure you have done me, by something in the same way that may give you satisfaction. But this is hoping too much : every author has not the talent of rendering his work pleasant to the reader in handling subjects of so dry a nature.

I should like well enough to entertain you on English poetry ; but MILTON, of whose poems one of the members of your academy has given us so beautiful a translation, acquaints you with its genius better than any thing I could say on the subject. Wherefore I will confine myself to treat of their versification, on which it is easier for me to satisfy you.

You know that the English have shaken off the yoke of rhyme in epic and dramatic poems ; but still submit to it in the other kinds of poetry : and their rhymed versification is pretty much the same with ours, which they have copied after. You will judge by what they have preserved of it, as well by the changes they made therein, of the advantages their poets draw from it. This at least is certain, that if all the differences they have made do not render it more agreeable, they make it easier.

For example, the distinction of masculine and feminine rhymes, is not observed in English poetry. Tho' their language has much fewer words that end in *e* mute than ours, yet their verses abound with those rhymes which we call feminine: such as *fame, name; love, move; dance, chance, &c. shore and more* in English have the same sound as *aurore and flore* in French. But in this regard the English poets do what our old poets were wont to do. They admit masculine and feminine rhymes promiscuously, just as they happen to offer. It is true that some of their authors have complained, that these are not frequent enough in their tongue. The different sorts of flat rhymes and mixed rhymes, which are more in use with us than with them, are so many delicacies which please our ear; and the distinction of those that are masculine and feminine, was not thought of by us, till our poetry began to take a higher flight.

The English have the same sorts of verse with us, but they make a very different use of them. In tragedy, comedy and most other long poems, we generally employ the Alexandrine verse: the English on the contrary scarce ever admit it. DRYDEN indeed has interspersed his latter works with several of these: but Mr. POPE blames him for it. The Italians and French formerly admitted but five feet or ten syllables in a heroic verse: the English have retained this custom. And as it is the kind of verse, to which they have most applied

applied themselves, they have rendered its mechanism easier and more diversified ; and thereby, as they tell you, the verse itself more harmonious and agreeable. We constantly place the pause after the fourth syllable.

Je vis ici, grace aux destins prosperes,
Comme autrefois vivoient nos premiers peres,
Avec la paix et la frugalité,
Le doux repos et l'aimable gaité,
Des PHILEMONS cherchent les toits rustiques,
Les jeux, les ris sont mes dieux domestiques :
Aucun souci ne trouble mon sommeil,
Et le plaisir m'attend à mon reveil.
Seul de mon tems il dispense l'usage ;
Le gout des fleurs, l'amour du jardinage,
Me font passer les plus heureux momens,
Et tous mes soins sont des amusemens.

This sameness of measure in the verse may at length tire the ear : the English do not run the same risk : sometimes they put the pause after the fourth syllable, as in ours.

“ Prevailing warmth * has still thy mind
possest,

“ And second youth * is kindled in thy
breast.

ADDISON to DRYDEN.

At other times they divide the verse in the middle, as in the following example.

“ How

“ How long, great Poet, * shall thy sacred
lays

“ Provoke our wonder *, and transcend our
praise ?

ibid.

And sometimes in fine they place the pause
after the sixth :

“ Can neither injuries * of time, or age,

“ Damp thy poetick heat *, and quench
thy rage ?

ibid.

The variety of English versification depends on the judicious changing and dispositions of the different measures.

Mr. POPE, the English BOILEAU, whose sentiments on this subject may be regarded as a law, is of opinion, that in order to give the verse more harmony and variety, the pause at the fourth and six syllables should not be continued more than three times together, without the interposition of another, for fear of tiring the ear by the same continued tone : and as the verse which is cut in the middle by a *Cæsura* runs faster, he thinks it may be continued longer, without tiring as much as the others.

For my part, I find the pause after the sixth syllable heavier than after the fourth : if it be really as languid as it appears to me, we suffer no great loss in not using it. But I cannot say
the

the same thing of that which divides the verse
into two equal parts.

“ Sur des lits de fleurs * l'aimable jeunesse,
“ Avec les plaisirs * folatre fans cesse.

This measure, if I mistake not, is as harmonious as any other, and might be very proper for Lyric poetry. It must be allowed, that our verses of ten syllables are too monotonous: the diversity of pauses seems to remedy this defect in those of the English. It gives variety and richness to their versification.

One thing peculiar to the English poets is their relish for *triple* rhymes. I pass directly to an example as the best method of explaining myself.

Ethereal sweets shall next my muse engage :
And this *Mæcenas*, claims your patronage.
Of little creatures wond'rous acts I treat ;
The ranks and mighty leaders of their state,
Their laws, employments, and their wars
relate.

ADDISON.

Thus from time to time the English repeat the same rhyme three times, and that in all sorts of poetry: 'tis their manner of closing a stretch of thought. Even in tragedy, from which they have banished rhyme, they have recourse to it for the most striking places. 'Tis their way of advertising those of the audience whose capacity they suspect, that they are to prepare for hearing fine things. They frequently

frequently close every act with a stanza of nine or eleven verses, the three last of which rhyme together. They find great charms in this sort of triplets, and no wonder: 'tis an effect of habit, which makes every thing pleasant. Yet mr. POPE, to whom I refer for whatever regards English verse, finds fault with the frequent use of those triple rhymes as a vicious licence, and wishes they were never used but in passages of some beauty.

You know, sir, that one of the greatest difficulties in our versification is, that the same words have not always the same measure in the verse. *Ame, femme, prendre, tendre, &c.* have but one syllable at the end of a verse, or before a vowel; before a consonant they have two: and so of all words of one or more syllables ending in *e* mute; they are longer or shorter according as they are placed. The English reckon the *e* mute as nothing, wherever it occurs: *love, wine, bottle, white, &c.* are always monosyllables in their verse. 'Tis perhaps what gives them a certain harshness, unknown to ours.

Our custom in this respect, by making French verse smoother, may possibly render it more feeble and languid. By a contrary practice the English verse is sometimes stronger, but generally harsher. If the desire of expressing more matter in few words makes them run the risk of some roughness; our fear of offending the ear perhaps makes us express too little. However it cannot be denied that superior

perior genius's find means to surmount the greatest difficulties in all languages. CORNEILLE's verse is nervous, and WALLER's sweet.

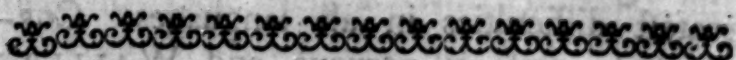
The English versification has a defect very inconsistent with harmony, which is, to permit the *Hiatus*. In all languages the poets have been always offended at the disagreeable clashing of two vowels. Since MALHERBE piqued himself on not suffering one single *hiatus*, our good poets have followed his example: and at present it is so gross a fault with us that no body commits it. The English poets, not excepting the most famous hitherto, have not been so nice. Mr. POPE, who has best observed its bad effect, has less run into it than any of them. Nothing can be reproached to the English on the score of genius: but perhaps they have been a little too negligent in improving the art.

With regard to our poetry, I am of opinion, that it would be a dangerous enterprize to attempt any innovation. In the point of politeness and perfection, to which our great masters have carried it, we cannot do better than to imitate them. Such as have endeavoured to find different roads from those they traced out to us, have generally gone astray.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

L E T.



LETTER XVIII.

To Monsieur DE CREBILLON, junior;

On the inconstancy of the English and French in their modes of dress: with observations on the peculiar taste of the English ladies in this respect.

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

I AM ever surprized that the good sense of the English saves them not from many ridicules, which should seem only to fall to the share of so light a nation as ours. All the world knows how high we have carried the extravagance of our modes: yet how silly soever they are, this wise people have adopted them. The English do still worse perhaps, they study like us to invent new fashions; and in things which depend on taste, they have very indifferent success. You will not find in the two houses of parliament any of those happy and fruitful genius's, whose superior taste fixes the destiny of modes, who risk all, and make every thing succeed; whom all the world condemns, and yet imitates. It is an advantage which some of the English would fain dispute with us: and I know not why they envy us such a glory. I refer them to your works, to learn what esteem we have for those

those happy mortals, whom they endeavour to equal.

In regard to the women in England, they affect as much to recede from our fashions, as the sprightly men study to follow them: their taste agrees but in one point with that of the French ladies: it is just as inconstant. In this country, as well as in ours, nothing is so subject to change as the womens head-dress. *Within my own memory*, says MR. ADDISON, *I have known it to rise and fall above thirty degrees. About ten years ago it shot up to a very great height, in so much that the female part of our species were much taller than the men.* For several years past the English and French ladies are become more humble in this respect. The sex here has lately made a more considerable sacrifice to reason: they have greatly contracted the circumference of their hoops. As the French ladies have copied after the English in their excesses, I hope they will have the sense to imitate them in their reformation. If it be too great presumption to think them capable of such an effort, at least there is nothing but what time brings about, and we may expect great things from their natural inconstancy.

Generally speaking, it is thought that the women of this country have worse success than the men in inventing modes. Those which our country women invent please us, or at least we accustom ourselves to them; here on the contrary the sex contrive some, which the

the men cannot endure : and what is very singular, 'tis observed that the women of condition are the worst dressed. If I dared believe my eyes, I should be of this opinion : but I do not pretend to be learned enough in matters of such importance, to venture to pass judgment. I suspect only, that in regard to modes, the English ladies study the graces less than the French, or are not so knowing : for it is not to be supposed that they have less desire to please.

Some years ago the ladies of the first rank had brought up a very extraordinary fashion, to say nothing worse of it; and that was to wear none but rumpled linnen. Head-dresses, ruffles, every thing must be so : and the art of rumpling a handkerchief for the neck regularly, was then the last ceremony of the toilet. I leave you to guess at the reasons for such a fashion, and whether it was not contrary to that decency, upon which the English women have always valued themselves. In their present manner of dress, they seem to endeavour to mimic the London *Grisettes*, who generally please all those that in love-affairs have no regard to titles. I cannot say what views the ladies may have in so doing : but this is certain, that the men are most obstinate in giving the preference to the *Grisettes* : perhaps the self-love of ladies of quality will not let them see that they resemble them in nothing but dress.

I must however remark one thing to the honour of the English ladies, that there are among them a great number of philosophers, who take such pride in liberty and independence, that they will by no means submit to the yoke of fashion, whose empire is so much revered in France by both sexes. Nay, in order to outbrave the multitude, from which they scorn to receive laws, each of them frequently contrives peculiar modes at all hazards: and whatever is the event, they bear it with most intrepid courage and heroic constancy: for which reason they have a just claim to the title of women of fortitude.

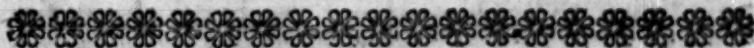
If one of these ladies has a whimsical head-dress on, a whole assembly may laugh at the oddness of the figure she makes, without putting her out of countenance. I have seen one of them wear a crown-bird, which may be called monstrous, in comparison of those that have appeared in France: all the jokes thrown on her by the company could not determine her to clip the least feather of its wings: probably she found that this head-dress gave her more of the air of a conqueror. Thus ALEXANDER wore an eagle with expanded wings on his helmet.

Sometimes also, for want of invention the ladies of quality here dress their heads after the pictures of their ancestors of the fourth or fifth generation: insomuch that the opera house is the repertory of all the modes, that have been invented these two or three hun-

dred years. For my own part, I have observed there all the fashions that started up in France since the time of FRANCIS I.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c;



LETTER XIX.

To the Duke DE ***;

On chearfulness and gaiety of temper; good and ill-natured raillery: the gloominess of the English, with its bad effects.

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD DUKE,

IT is an effect of your usual goodness, not to forget an unprofitable servant: the less I deserve from your grace, the more sensible is my pleasure in receiving pledges of your remembrance in ENGLAND. My most respectful attachment notwithstanding, I still find myself deeply in debt. How beautiful it is in a person of your rank to know how to feel! How happy, to know how to think, and to unite such advantages, as none but those who possess them set a due value on, with those of birth, which are much more common,

common, and always over-rated by persons who enjoy no others.

You have painted yourself, without knowing it, in the letter which your grace wrote me. I have found in it all the charms of your conversation, that easy natural wit, which writers by profession find difficulty in imitating; that light sportiveness, which is but futility in those who do not think, but is a great ornament in such, as use it only in order to make reason forget its serious tone, and to lend it that of pleasantry; that lively and amiable gaiety in fine, which is generally a mark of goodness of heart and mind *.

Since you vouchsafe to enquire how I spend my time, I ingenuously confess, that now as the language of this country begins to become familiar to me, I study men more than books; this study has always been of my taste, and perhaps it is the most useful. I reap greater benefit by attending to the conversations of companies where I go, than by reading a volume of the *Spectator* in my closet. Nay I now and then perform the functions of that gentleman. This is the native soil of philosophers; and all ranks of men afford some: wherefore, wherever I happen to be, I seek, I examine. Sometimes I go to make my speculations in those coffee-houses, where peers of the realm entertain each other on parliamentary affairs: sometimes in those,

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where

* Gaudium hoc non nascitur nisi ex virtutum conscientia: non potest gaudere nisi fortis, nisi justus, nisi temperans. SEN.

where grave ministers of the church of ENGLAND, with pipes in their mouths, censure the Roman clergy. I do not even disdain to make one of a company of Jack-tars, and to hear them, amidst their pots and bowls, exclaiming against the government, damning the French, and swearing to extirpate the Spaniards. A philosopher who closely examines this nation, cannot avoid being surprized at the mixture of its virtues and vices. He will sometimes observe, in a man of the meanest profession, that nobleness and elevation of sentiments, which bring all conditions near one another: at other times he will see a peer not to blush for vices which degrade all orders of men.

Nothing is so uncommon among the English as that sweetness of temper, and cheerfulness of humour, which are the charms of society; and they are great losers for want of them; they would be much happier, if they were more social. One may assert, without wronging them, that they know not how to enjoy life as well as the French. Might not this be a proof, that they are not as much philosophers as they imagine? The true ones are those who resemble your grace, I mean the amiable philosophers. After all, philosophy is nothing more than the art of making ourselves happy, that is, of seeking pleasure in regularity, and reconciling what we owe to society with what we owe to our selves.

This

This chearfulness, which is a characteristic of our nation, in the eye of an Englishman passes almost for folly: but is their gloominess a greater mark of wisdom? And folly against folly, is not the most chearful sort the best? At least if our gaiety makes them sad; they ought not to find it strange, if their seriousness makes us laugh.

As this disposition to joy is not familiar to them, and as they look on every thing as a fault which they do not find at home, the English who live among us are hurt by it. Several of their authors reproach us with it as a vice, or at least as a ridicule.

Mr. ADDISON styles us a *comic nation*. In my opinion it is not acting the philosopher on this point, to regard as a fault, the quality which contributes most to the pleasures of society, and happiness of life. PLATO, convinced that whatever makes men happier makes them better, advises to neglect nothing that may excite and convert into an early habit this sense of joy in children. SENECA places it in the first rank of good things. Certain it is at least, that gaiety may be a concomitant of all sorts of virtues, but that there are some vices, with which it is incompatible.

As to him who laughs at every thing, and him who laughs at nothing, neither of them has sound judgment: all the difference I find between them is, that the last is constantly the most unhappy. Those who speak against

chearfulness, prove nothing else but that they were born melancholic, and that in their hearts they perhaps rather envy than condemn it.

The English *Spectator*, whose constant object was the good of mankind in general, and of his nation in particular, should, according to his own principles, place chearfulness among the most desirable qualities: probably he did not sufficiently reflect, when he found fault with it so openly. To dress virtue in the robes of sadness, as most men do, is robbing her of her real charms. Mr. ADDISON asserts, that gaiety is one of the greatest obstacles to the prudent conduct of women: but are those of a melancholic temper, as the English women generally are, less subject to the foibles of love? I am acquainted with some doctors in this science, to whose judgments I would more willingly refer than to his: and perhaps in reality persons naturally of a gay temper are too easily taken off by different objects, to give themselves up to all the excesses of this passion.

Mr. HOBBS, a celebrated philosopher of this nation, maintains that laughing proceeds from our pride alone. This is a paradox, if asserted of laughing in general: but all the world know that this writer, tho' estimable in other respects, thought too ill of human nature. DES CARTES has with justice condemned those principles and maxims, which suppose that all men are bad. To bring the
causes

causes which mr. HOBBS assigns for laughing under suspicion, it is sufficient to remark that proud people are commonly those who laugh least. Gravity is the inseparable companion of pride. To say that a man is vain, because the play of a kitten, or the aeries of harlequin make him laugh; would be advancing a most absurd proposition: and this cannot be his meaning. We should distinguish well between laughter inspired by joy, and that which arises from mockery. The malicious sneer is improperly called laughter. True it is that pride is the father of this: but that has nothing in its principle or effects, which deserves condemnation. 'Tis this last only that we find amiable in others, and it is a happiness to feel a disposition towards it in ourselves. 'Tis this, which you have the talent to excite even in those who are the greatest strangers to it: because it is a necessary consequence of the pleasure they feel in hearing you. When I see an Englishman laugh, I fancy I see him hunting after joy, rather than having caught it: and this is more particularly remarkable in their women, whose temper is inclined to melancholy. A laugh leaves no more traces on their countenance, than a flash of lightning on the face of the heavens. The most laughing air is instantly succeeded by the most gloomy: one would be apt to think that their souls open with difficulty to joy, or at least that joy is not pleased with its habitation there.

In regard to fine raillery, it must be allowed, that it is not natural to the English: and therefore those who endeavour at it make but an ill figure. Some of their authors have candidly confessed, that pleasantry is quite foreign to their character: but according to the reason they give, they lose nothing by this confession. Bishop SPRAT gives the following one: *the English, says he, have too much courage to suffer to be derided, and too much virtue and honour to mock others.* Yet when the case happens, (and I have seen some examples of it) the Englishman, who for want of honour, takes the liberty of railing at another, and he whose courage cannot bear it, strip both to their buff, and box it out till one of them says he has got enough. I have likewise read in some travels, that fists are the only arms the Chinese use in their duels.

An offensive pleasantry is attended with dismal consequences among us. But I do not attempt to justify raillery and mockery or unseasonable mirth; I only take the part of cheerfulness. The wretched talent of ridiculing a person, to gratify the ill-nature of others, is the mark of a little mind void of honour or elevation. LA FONTAINE has said very well:

“ Dieu ne crea que pour les sots

“ Les mechans ciseurs de Bons mots.

I do not enquire whether people of this stamp are more common among us than elsewhere,

where, and believe it better to abandon them all, be the number ever so great. If several of us are vain of such a frivolous and contemptible talent, they appear to me quite as ridiculous as they possibly can to any Englishman. They commonly incur the hatred of those very persons, whom they excite to laughter *. I know no vice that is amiable, and will never apologize for such as may happen to be peculiar to my native country. *He, says one of our writers, who knocks a man down by a BON MOT, is little more commendable than he who shoots him thro' the head.*

Moreover, if the English seldom laugh, there is a set of men in England who never laugh at all, and those are the presbyterians: they make laughing to be the eighth mortal sin. According to them, a woman who laughs commits as great a fault, as a woman would among us, in swerving from innocence and modesty. Thus there are families of them, who have never laughed for two or three generations. What errors, what extravagances enter into the heads of men! And how I pity them, when they are possessed with the dismal sort! These austere teachers, who set up for very scrupulous observers of scripture, would do better to follow this maxim, so becoming him whom God had endowed

— — — — — solutos
Qui captat risus hominum, famamque dicacis
Affectat, niger est: hunc, tu Romane, caveto.

HORAT.

dowed with the gift of wisdom: *the laughter of the wiseman is seen, and not heard* *.

Chearfulness does and always will fall to the share of a good-natured, sociable and well-regulated nation. What people has been more renowned for sweetness of morals and charms of society than the ATHENIANS! And yet were they not at the same time the chearfullest people of GREECE? Has not ATHENS produced as many great men as austere LACEDEMON? In our days, the PERSIANS, the most knowing and polite people of the East, are reputed the most chearful. Every where we see men more chearful, according as they are more sociable: and mankind were made to live in society.

If I so strenuously espouse the cause of chearfulness, 'tis because it is not only desirable in itself, and for the sake of those with whom we live; but likewise for the benefit of society in general. Good humour is the surest prescription against enthusiasm of all kinds. Cheerful people do not dream of injuring their neighbours, nor of fomenting sedition in the state. Their sole application is to enjoy life, and make the best of it.

Some-

* *Le Rire du sage se voit, & ne s'entend pas.* The translator has not found this passage, as M. LE BLANC has rendered it, either in the canonical or apocryphal books of holy writ. The passage that comes nearest to it seems to be Ecclesiasticus xxi. 20. *a wise man doth scarce smile a little.*

Somebody has remarked that the Italians have placed sadness among vices, by giving it the name of *malignity*. And indeed sad and melancholic minds are dissatisfied with every thing, because they are constantly so with themselves: they are daily complaining of the government, and never fail to disturb it when they find an opportunity. It is people of this turn of mind that stir up insurrections in states of all kinds: and if such troubles have happen'd more frequently in England than in other countries, the reason is perhaps, that this disposition of mind is more common here than else-where. A dark gloomy humour easily lapses into fanaticism; and fanaticism leads to every thing. It smothers all sense of humanity; and knows not even the voice of nature. The factious set of men who cut off the head of king CHARLES I. and those among us, who endeavoured to change the crown of HENRY III. into a Monkish crown, certainly were not chearful people. The celebrated BRUTUS, one of CÆSAR's murderers, was of a melancholic temper. The English poet, who has best painted nature, the general defects of mankind, and those peculiar to his nation, SHAKESPEARE has set this truth in a strong light by verses, which are a proof of the excellency of his judgment, and of the goodness of his character. He says:

"The

- " The man that hath no musick in himself,
 " And is not mov'd with concord of sweet
 sounds,
 " Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
 " The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
 " And his affections dark as Erebus:
 " Let no such man be trusted.

MERCHANT of Venice, act v. scene 1.

This is to speak as a poet, but to think as a philosopher. 'Tis foreseeing effects in their cause. Accordingly it is true, that those persons who are most transported by music, are generally best organized for their own happiness and that of others: they bear the same degree of sensibility in all their affections. For how much pleasure are you not indebted, my lord, to the taste you have for all arts: and as to sensibility, if one may judge by the strong paintings you make of it, who enjoys it more than your grace!

Whatever the English can say on cheerfulness, its effects in general and particular ought to make it be esteemed as a good. For my own part, while I condemn such of them as blame us for being cheerful; I will carefully avoid following their example, and reproaching them for being sad. We have some power over ourselves; but there are physical causes, the effect of which cannot be hindered by the best use of reason. When things are closely examined, we must constantly return to this maxim: men are less to be blamed in general than

than pitied. However it be, whether the quality of the climate or any other cause makes sadness contagious here, as I am in MONTAGNE's case, *and that I neither love nor esteem it*, if you perceive by my letters that it begins to grow on me, be pleased to give me notice; and I set out the very instant to breath my native air, and resume my natural tone. Stedfastly relying on your goodness, I will go to find in the charms of your company, what I might have lost in that of the English,

I have the honour to be,

My lord duke,

Your grace's most humble, &c.

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## LETTER XX.

To Monsieur DE BUFFONS;

*Describing a contrast of two singular characters, the one in a Frenchman, the other in an English peer.*

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

LET the resolution, which M. DE \* \* has lately taken, be ever so unreasonable, I am no way surprized at it: I know his manner

manner of thinking and acting; and as much as I esteem his probity and uprightness of character, so much I disapprove all his oddities and caprices. It is not enough for a man to be honest, he should likewise be reasonable. M. DE \*\* has spent thirty years of his life in hunting after a regimen of health, and a regulation of his affairs. Whatever might have been his constitution and fortune, this was the true way to ruin both; and he has accordingly succeeded: he would not live as others; and he is punished for it. He goes in vain to Montpellier in search of what he could not find at Paris: he stands in need of altering his way of thinking, not the climate. Travelling will be of no service to him; his soul is not calm enough to be affected by new objects. The uneasiness that makes him fly, will follow him every where: he runs away with himself.

It is unhappy for many people to have known this odd man: they imitate him without knowing how far the spirit of singularity may carry them, and even without attending that the person they copy after, is perhaps threatened with ending his days in an hospital or mad-house. I pity him much: and at the same time heartily wish that others may profit by his example, and grow wiser.

I own I have an aversion for every one who affects to deliver himself up to the caprices of his taste and irregularities of his imagination. In such a case a man seems to quit the com-  
mon

mon road, only because he knows a better : but when it constantly falls out, that in straying from others he loses his way, his presumption ought to expose him to the contempt of the company he endeavours to drop. All men have not reason enough to be their own guides: they require rules and examples to conduct them.

There have been few men of more singularity than the late earl of P \*\*, who died some years since. This English nobleman had built himself a very particular system of life. His character was diametrically opposite to that of M. DE \*\*. The latter would fain be always sick, the former would never own so much as that any disease could possibly seize him. Far from ever complaining of any thing, he would never allow that any accident whatever was capable of making him unhappy. This was a difficult task : but he had set the resolution. The only means which the greatest philosophers were able to find, was to arm themselves with patience to make head against such misfortunes as human prudence could not prevent. Our English philosopher had invented a shorter way, and that was to plead ignorance (if I may be allowed a law-expression) to every disagreeable thing that could befall him. EPICURE, on the death of his wife, would have people say, that *she was restored to him who gave her*. My Lord P \*\* was resolved to restore nothing of what he had received ; in vain was he told of  
any

any thing dismal; he constantly maintained there was nothing in it. When his lady died, he would by no means believe it: and as long as he lived, the cover of the deceased countess was by his express order regularly set on the table. If his son happened to be absent, the same custom was observed. When he himself was at the point of death, he stood it out that he was not sick; and a quarter of an hour before he expired, tho' he was perfectly in his senses, he obstinately insisted on getting up, to go and take the air abroad. When men have given a certain turn to their imagination, they become no longer sensible of its deviations: they are calmly and coolly unreasonable, and close the scene by being themselves the dupes of the farces, which they at first acted purely to deceive others.

I cannot say, if my lord P \*\*, as singular as he appears, was not the ape of that old philosopher, who, suffering extremely by a fit of the gout, cried out with gnashing his teeth: *No, I will not allow that thou art an evil.* Let us blush for our species, in thinking on all the follies to which it is subject: but what most surprizes me is, that the country where good sense seems to be most common, should be that in which all sorts of folly are carried the greatest length.

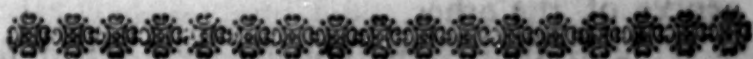
I will end my discourse on that kind of English philosopher, with a little story, which is in every body's mouth here.

My

My lord C\*\*\* a man of as much wit and sense as any in England, paying a visit to my lord P\*\*, who, notwithstanding his oddities, had a good share of both; a favourite little dog of the latter bit the former in the leg. *Fear not*, says my lord P\*\*, *my little dog never bites*. My lord C\*\*\*, who had already knock'd down the little creature with a blow of his cane, replied in the same strain: *Fear not*, my lord, *I never strike dogs*.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



## LETTER XXI.

To the Marquis Du T\*\*.

*On the two houses of Parliament.*

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD,

THE desire of knowledge is a proof of understanding; the choice of the objects it fixes on is the effect of reason: is there any study more becoming man than that of the nature and laws of different governments? Continue, my lord, to cultivate a taste, which always supposes laudable qualities in a person

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who

who possesses it. The habit of pursuing those great objects, gives an elevation to the soul, which it does not assume in other points of knowledge.

To come to the particular point which excites your curiosity, it appears to me, that the house of commons has so much authority, only because the house of lords is almost entirely dependent on the court. This last is the great council of the nation; 'tis the privilege of this house to put a stop to the schemes of an ambitious minister, and to propose measures for keeping peace or making war: and it is the business of the house of commons to find means for raising the necessary supplies for maintaining the one, or defraying the expences of the other.

If both houses are equally established for taking care of the people, the peers of the realm are born guardians of its rights and liberties. The form of the government gives them both an equal share in the legislative power. But what becomes of the wisest constitutions, when those who are made to support them, find their interest in overturning them! Execution is the life of the laws.

The lords being mostly united with the sovereign, their power, which ought to hold the scale between the king and the people, I fear, can serve only to break the poise. Have they not contributed more to extend the prerogatives of the crown, than to preserve the liberties of the subject? Is not this  
what

what prevents the upper house of parliament from having all the credit it should have by its institution? The bench of is intirely devoted to the court; and the greatest part of the nobility are no less attached to it by the honours they have either received or expect.

A stranger admitted into this august assembly, cannot avoid having a very high idea of it, when he is witness of the noble freedom, with which the interests of the people are supported, or the conduct of a minister inquired into: but the manner of collecting the votes does not come up to that, after which matters are debated. 'Tis generally but a sort of formality. He is scandalized to see the clergy constantly on the side of the ruler, entering into all his views, and favouring all his projects.

After a debate upon matters of the highest importance,---he is surprized to find one member of this house disposing of the votes of several absentees. This privilege of the peers to give their votes by proxy, is manifestly contrary to the welfare of the nation. Whatever care is taken in choosing such as they can confide in; tho' they may be sure of their probity, they cannot always be so of their capacity. Does it not happen to persons of the strictest honesty and most upright intentions, to think differently on the same subject? He who is present may possibly not be moved by those reasons, which would have convinced the absentee he represents. Those votes which he disposes of, give the sanction of law to an

act, which the persons themselves would perhaps have opposed with all their might.

It is by the interest the court finds in maintaining this privilege of the lords, that all the attempts of the commons to abolish it have proved abortive. It is so much the easier for a minister to make an act pass in the house of lords, as that does not require the attendance even of his fast friends. In the most important questions, the third part of the votes that carry them, is frequently of absent members \*. Some of them taken up with their private affairs, others indulging their pleasures, learn by the public papers, that they have given their votes to additional taxes.

What an abuse in a body so wisely established, and how fatal may not the consequences prove! When the matter under consideration is the making of laws, on which depend the safety and happiness of a people, should the votes of the absent be reckoned? How can those, whose birth-right it is to guard the interests of their country, avoid blushing at intrusting others with the care of them! Do they not render themselves unworthy, both of the rank they hold, and of the

\* Among the debates of the house of commons, we find this passage of one of the members, who pretends to have been often puzzled to know if the house of peers were met. *I enquired, says he, one day, of a dozen people I met in the lobby, if the lords were sitting? we cannot tell. Do you know if they sate yesterday? No. Do you know when they sate? No, &c.*

the authority reposed in them, by so dangerous an abuse of the one and the other?

At Rome, where greater attention was given to the public good, the presence of a certain number of senators was necessary to authenticate decrees: and a fine was laid on those who did not appear on the stated days of meeting.

This privilege of the peers is too contrary to the good of the nation, for those who have that truly at heart to reap any advantage from it. What can their attendance, what can their eloquence do against the votes of absentees! These, lulled to sleep in the lap of inactivity, baffle the efforts of the most zealous patriots.

The members of the house of commons likewise might well deserve some strictures: the privileges they enjoy, afford them no excuse for absenting from parliament. And yet how many are there, who seldom or never attend? Can they throw a greater insult on the people who intrust them with their rights, than by amusing themselves on their estates in waging war with foxes, while the nation is debating at London, whether it should declare war with Spain?

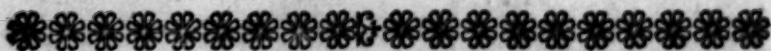
Ought the English to wonder, if sometimes their kings devolve the weighty burthen of their authority on their ministers, while those, whom the laws have intrusted with the guardianship of their privileges, confide in others for a care, which, as it is the greatest of all

advantages, should be the most sacred of all their duties?

I have the honour to be,

My lord,

Your lordship's most humble, &c.



## LETTER XXII.

TO Monsieur DE LA CHAUSÉE;

*The subject of private marriages continued and exemplified in the custom, which prevails among the fair sex in England, of making love by private messages, and public advertisements.*

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

IF you are astonished, that the laws of England authorize dissolute wenches to use all sorts of ways to get husbands; you will not perhaps be less surprized at some customs, which equally tend to favour matrimony, and for compassing it offer honefter means indeed, but quite unknown to us. These are for virtuous girls, who have lain neglected, and horribly fear to die maids; or for prudent widows, who can find no comfort for the loss of a first husband, but in the arms of a second. People declare their sentiments more boldly here than

than elsewhere on all subjects: true modesty is one of the virtues of the sex in England: but it must also be allowed, that they know not what it is to practice the false.

When a woman has a mind to be married to a young man, whom she has it not in her power to come in company with; she will frequently send him a message at once with her proposal: and the confident will not always scruple to tell her name. In the main this custom may not be as much to be condemned as it appears to us: perhaps it is only the effect of the good sense which distinguishes this nation from all others. At least why should it not be allowed to do, for so lawful an end as that of matrimony, what very great ladies among us put in practice with less honest designs.

Again an English woman takes a liking to some person in a place where she cannot reveal her mind to him. If he is a stranger, and she knows not where to find him; she makes him a declaration of her passion in the public papers, describes him from head to foot, that he may not mistake himself; puts him in mind of the time and place where she saw him; and appoints a meeting, if he chooses it. These news-papers are the greatest conveniencies in the world. If a man wants to borrow money, or sell a horse; he advertises the public by this canal. For two shillings you may put in what advertisement you will: and they are of no less service for carrying

rying on a love intrigue, than for recovering a lost snuff box. Here is an advertisement, which I read in one of yesterday's papers.

“ **I** F the young gentleman, who pick'd up  
 “ a lady's handkerchief at St. Paul's last  
 “ Tuesday, and advertised it in Wednesday's  
 “ paper, is not married ; and that he has the  
 “ same sentiments in his heart, which she  
 “ thought she read in his eyes ; let him give  
 “ an account of his substance, and a descrip-  
 “ tion of his person and qualifications, with  
 “ a direction of the place of his usual resi-  
 “ dence : and the lady who drop'd the hand-  
 “ kerchief, will give him an opportunity to  
 “ bring it back, and to aspire to greater fa-  
 “ vours.”

You think perhaps, sir, that I joke, and exercise my imagination on a subject that may admit of it : but if you will not take my word, I have the very news-paper before me, and will send it to you. I have likewise kept another published three months ago, which contains a much more singular advertisement. I give it to you word for word.

“ **T** H I S is to give notice to all persons  
 “ whom it may concern, that a wi-  
 “ dow of between thirty and forty years of  
 “ age, of a good family and considerable for-  
 “ tune, of a strong constitution, tho' fair ;  
 “ and, as to her figure passable at least ; in-  
 “ tends

“ tends in the course of this month to deliver  
 “ up her person and fortune to a man, in  
 “ quality of her true and lawful husband, who  
 “ has the following qualifications.

“ First, it is required, that he be come to  
 “ the age of maturity, that is, from twenty to  
 “ five and twenty.

“ Secondly, that he be of a good constitu-  
 “ tion, which has not been hurt by debau-  
 “ chery, nor subject to the spleen, vapours,  
 “ or any other melancholic disposition.

“ Thirdly, he must be brown-haired, and  
 “ of a middle stature: she has reasons for not  
 “ liking a man of too large a size, and thinks  
 “ that the little is not always to be depended  
 “ on. As to his face, it will be sufficient if  
 “ he is not quite ugly: but she will absolute-  
 “ ly reject an *Adonis*, because she would have  
 “ a husband to herself alone.

“ Fourthly, for worldly substance she de-  
 “ sires none of him, provided he has all the  
 “ other qualifications required. She does not  
 “ so much as insist on his having been in  
 “ France; if he is otherwise well-bred, good-  
 “ natured, complaisant, and knows how to  
 “ behave towards women. However upon  
 “ an equality of all other circumstances, a  
 “ person who has spent two years at Paris,  
 “ shall have the preference,

“ Fifthly, he must make outward professi-  
 “ on at least of the established religion; for  
 “ fear that a non-conformist, under pretence  
 “ of tying his wife down to the severity of the  
 “ gospel,

“ gospel, should take it into his head to en-  
 “ slave her to his caprices, fix the hour and  
 “ time to be spent at her toilet, retrench orna-  
 “ ments of dress, regulate her occupations,  
 “ forbid her public diversions, and deprive her  
 “ of lawful and fashionable amusements.

“ Those who have any pretensions, are  
 “ desired to send their names, and where they  
 “ may be enquired after, in a letter sealed and  
 “ put under cover to mr. TOMPSON banker  
 “ in Fleet-street.

“ N. B. Notice is given to all clergymen,  
 “ tho’ ever so young and conceited of their  
 “ persons, not to give themselves any pains.  
 “ The gentlemen of the black gown are  
 “ excluded the lists, on account of the  
 “ gloominess they generally spread in fami-  
 “ lies.

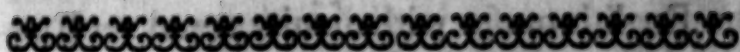
“ Smoakers are likewise excepted against;  
 “ because those who have contracted this  
 “ nasty habit, either love not their own  
 “ home, or bring bad company to it.”

Let us not condemn the manners of our  
 neighbours. If our *Police* tolerated such  
 public advertisements, how many women  
 would gladly take the advantage of this me-  
 thod? and how many Paris writers would be  
 found mean enough to become messengers  
 and secretaries of such negotiations?

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

LETTER



## LETTER XXIII.

To the Abbé DU BOS;

*On the state of painting and sculpture in England.*

LONDON, &amp;c.

SIR,

YOU have given us an excellent treatise on poetry and painting, in which, pursuant to HORACE's rule, you have constantly united them as two sisters. I have spoken here of the new edition you are preparing; and it is expected with great impatience. M. DE MOIVRE, who is not less a lover of the elegant arts than of geometry, desires a copy, and at the same time sends you his compliments.

Tho' painting and poetry have certainly a great mutual resemblance, yet to me they do not appear to have the same origin. The common maxim, that the same genius that makes poets forms painters, is perhaps received, like many others, purely for want of being examined. In general men had rather believe, than sift things to the bottom.

In this country at least this maxim is contradicted by experience. England has produced several celebrated poets. There are few  
in

in any nation, who may be compared with MILTON. Mr. POPE supports the honour of the English muses with dignity: and yet England has not hitherto bred one painter. Painting, sculpture and the other arts that depend on drawing, are as yet either unknown here, or in their infancy at most.

The contrary has happen'd in other countries. If the enchanting art of poetry has not been happily cultivated by the Flemish, they have made such progress in the no less charming art of painting, as has given jealousy to their neighbours. How high has not RUBENS's happy genius soared? What honour has not been done to his country, and even to his age, by this great man, who may be stiled the RAPHAEL of the Flemish school.

This same RUBENS, the famous VAN DYKE, and some other masters of reputation, have painted in England, without being able to form disciples worthy of them. Examples have only served to put them upon making unsuccessful trials. The English have been, for some time past, stripping Italy and France of the most exquisite paintings they can find. In the rich collection of sir ROBERT WALPOLE, I have with regret seen one of the finest pictures that POUSSIN ever painted, *The striking of the rock*, which I had left in Paris at my departure. There are several other collections in London, where young men may form their taste. Those who take to painting, follow the example we set them, and go to Italy, to study

study after the grand compositions of RA-  
PHAEL, JULIO ROMANO, and so many other  
great masters of the different schools. In fine,  
you know, sir, that the people of quality in  
England have such noble thoughts of the arts,  
that, not content with honouring and reward-  
ing them, some of them take pride in culti-  
vating them themselves. It is astonishing,  
that the passion they express in this respect, is  
so ill seconded by those who would find so  
much interest in gratifying it. But in vain are  
the seeds of arts imported hither, the soil  
seems not to be proper for them. They have  
not the same sun to make them grow : and if  
they shoot a few roots, they are soon kill'd by  
productions of bad taste, the plant that thrives  
and multiplies the most easily in this climate.

True it is, that Paris has the advantage of  
London in an academy of painting. LEWIS.  
XIV, to whom the elegant arts are so much  
indebted, has done more still : he has founded  
a second at Rome for the improvement of the  
young students of our nation. But POUSSIN,  
LE SUEUR, painters who have done most cre-  
dit to France, were prior to these noble esta-  
blishments. In all kinds of study, schools  
improve a genius, but give it not. They fa-  
cilitate the progress of the mind by teaching  
the mechanical parts of an art : but the at-  
tainment of those, on which perfection de-  
pends, requires a natural disposition. Schools  
of painting serve chiefly for giving a taste of  
drawing to artists of all sorts : but they alone  
will

will never enable a man to replace a LE MOINE or a PUGET. I am not afraid to say, that the best silver-smith of London is but a workman. A GERMAIN, a MESSONIER are other sort of men: they are draughts-men, they are engravers, they are great men in their way.

However, we must confess this truth, that the English have had one painter, or at least persuade themselves so: for as such they look on sir JAMES THORNHILL, who painted the dome of St. Paul's, Greenwich, and several other great works which you have seen. Nevertheless, as much a *Connoisseur* as you are in painting, I fancy you would be puzzled to decide, not in what part the painter excelled, but that in which he is less faulty.

This, if I mistake not, is the only English painter, who dared to aspire to that kind of painting, which requires a genius that nature had refused him: all the rest have been obliged to reduce themselves to portrait-painting: and it is surprizing that even in this way not one of them deserves to be named. And accordingly they have practised this noble profession as the meanest trade, for money alone, without the least ambition of fame. The thirst of gold renders men industrious; but that of reputation can alone make great men.

As to sir GODFREY KNELLER, whom the English have adopted, and you might have seen in London; tho' they have erected a stately monument for him in Westminster-  
abby;

abby; tho' mr. DRYDEN has much celebrated him, and mr. POPE translated RAPHAEL's famous latin epitaph \* for him; you would blame me, if I acknowledged any other merit in this German, than the judgment he shewed in choosing England for the place to exercise his talent in: it is the only country where he could possibly gain so much credit and honour: any where else they would not bestow the name of a painter on him.

If you believe the English, mr. GABRIEL CIBBER ||, who cut the *Basso-relievo's* of the monument, was another PRAXITELES: but does he even deserve to be ranked among the most ordinary sculptors? At present they have one RYSBRACK, a Fleming, whom they likewise hold in high esteem: they have employed him in several monuments of great men, and he has just finished a bust of MILTON: but certainly he does not restore life to the dead. Both mr. CIBBER and mr. RYSBRACK appear to me as far below a PUGET and a BOUCHARDON, as sir GODFREY KNELLER was below a RAPHAEL.

The portrait-painters are at this day more numerous and worse in London than ever they have

\* Living great nature fear'd he might outvy  
Her works; and dying, fears herself may die.

Hic situs est RAPHAEL, timuit quo sospite vinci  
Rerum magna parens, & moriente mori.

|| Father of the present player.

have been. Since mr. VANLOO came hither, they strive in vain to run him down; for no body is painted but by him. I have been to see the most noted of them; at some distance one might easily mistake a dozen of their portraits for twelve copies of the same original. Some have the head turned to the left, others to the right: and this is the most sensible difference to be observed between them. Moreover, excepting the face, you find in all, the same neck, the same arms, the same flesh, the same attitude; and to say all, you observe no more life than design in those pretended portraits. Properly speaking, they are not painters: they know how to lay colours on the canvas, but they know not how to animate it. Nature exists in vain for them, they see her not: or if they see her, they have not the art of expressing her. Those who possess this talent, as a RIGAUD and a LA TOUR, deserve alone to be honoured with the name of painters.

In painting, as in poetry, the two extremes seem to be the sublime and the burlesque. It may be said in some measure that CALLOT is to RAPHAEL what SCARRON is to VIRGIL. The genius of the English painters has not only found itself too weak to rise to the majesty of the first kind; they have not been happier whenever they attempted to descend into all the oddities of the second, which indeed is that they have practised most. They have not better success in expressing the  
ramblings

ramblings of fancy, than in copying the beauties of nature: which is a proof how much every thing that comes within the province of taste, is foreign to the inhabitants of this isle: for even these compositions, how extravagant soever they may appear, are susceptible of it. The pleasantries of their pictures are like those of their writings, flat, heavy, and over-done: they are a sort of national pleasantries, which divert none but themselves. Those political prints, which appear daily against the ministry, are all of this stamp: they have not the least delicacy, and are remarkable only for the grossness of the satyr. And yet they assume a vanity from this mock talent, and believe that other nations are in fault, if they are not affected by it. The ridiculous inclination of the Chinese to paint the grotesque makes the greatest part of the Europeans think that they are all deformed. The English have this bad taste for *Caricatura*.

To succeed in the grotesque, as well as to hit the agreeable, invention alone is not sufficient: the great secret is to know where to stop, and our neighbours, who over-do every thing, know no bounds in a sort that permits them to give full scope to their imagination. But yet it is certain that the English would have less regard for this somewhat ignoble way of painting, if they were as much hurt as we by low disgusting objects, which are the foundation of it. In that which requires a nobleness and elevation, they have shewn an

insufficiency, or rather a total inability; the sole cause of which is perhaps, that their sensations in general are not so fine and delicate as those of the people of the Southern countries. They breathe a thicker air, and seldomer see the sun: and that is sufficient to cause a great difference in their organs.

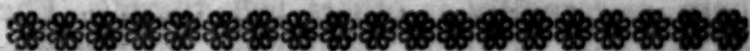
To conclude, those of them who have the talent to paint nature in burlesque, ennoble it by the use they make of it: they employ it to give a disrelish to vice.

The Luxembourg gallery by RUBENS, or the battles of ALEXANDER by LE BRUN never had a greater run in our country, than a set of prints actually have in England, engraved lately from pictures of a man of genius in this way, but who is as bad a painter, as he is a good subject. They have made the graver's fortune who sells them; and the whole nation has been infected by them, as one of the most happy productions of the age. I have not seen a house of note without these moral prints, which represent in a grotesque manner the Rake's Progress in all the scenes of ridicule and disgrace, which vice draws after it; sometimes even in those circumstances, the reality of which, if tolerably expressed, raises horror: and the English genius spares nothing that can inspire it. Thus the ancients were of opinion, that nothing could give such an aversion for intemperance, as the very sight of a person labouring under the effects of it. I verily believe that

that such pictures make a deeper impression on a people like this, who delight in strong representations, than the most sensible reflections, or the most pathetic discourses. What do I say? The human kind are the same every where: whatever end is proposed, it is surer and easier to make an impression on the senses, than to convince the understanding.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



# LETTER XXIV.

To Monsieur DE BUFFONS;

*On a character of great and laudable singularity in an English peer.*

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

IN my last letter I gave you an account of a very singular man: England affords some of all kinds. 'Tis the country where the greatest number of striking examples are found of all sorts of vices and virtues.

A circumstance which has fallen out this very day, gives me an opportunity of saying two words of one of the greatest lords of this court, whose singularity, which is thought

remarkable even in this country, would in ours be deem'd a prodigy, and ought to pass every where for a virtue. This person of so uncommon a character is the duke of D\*\*\*, who to the splendor of very high birth, and a great estate, joining the eminent virtues of his ancestors, is nevertheless so plain in his manners, so void of all pomp, and in a word so little susceptible of vain-glory; that the regard due to his rank, and the respect he himself gains, equally embarrass him. He shuns them as earnestly as others seek them. The greatest part of those, to whom, for the sake of order in society, it has been agreed to give the appellation of nobles or great men, esteem those forced honours as the fairest flower of their birth. If they are content with their condition, it is because they fancy it envied by others. In their high station they love nothing better than the humiliation, in which it keeps those about them. O! How many ill turns self-love does to mankind! That pride, which most of the great affect, is a proof of their little merit: they always have the air of being the most surprized at the honours they are adorned with; and this is a kind of acknowledgment how unworthy they find themselves of them. The virtuous man is neither abased nor puffed up; by an equal fortitude in good and bad fortune, he sees nothing in birth but the effect of chance, and nothing but his duty in what others call virtue.

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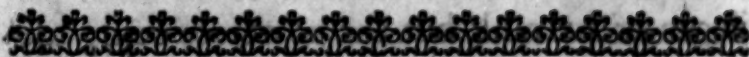
tue. Such is the Englishman, of whom I am speaking: he is a stranger to all other privileges of his rank but the power of being useful to his country, and knows not that there are men below him, but by the means he finds of doing them good. The less he requires respect, the more zealously it is paid him. How really little are men, who set so high a value on their pretended greatness! How effectually great are those, who like the duke of D \* \* \* regard as a duty to be ignorant of it! He has been just now appointed lord-lieutenant of Ireland. Sir ROBERT WALPOLE said on this occasion. *There is the duke D \* \* \* greatly embarrassed: he will be obliged to have a court, officers and guards about him: I believe that amidst all this grandeur, he will not find himself much at his ease.* What an eulogy on the vice-roy is this joke of the minister!

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

M 3

L E T.



## LETTER XXV.

To Monsieur DE LA CHAUSSÉE;

*On the encouragement given to arts and sciences in England and France : with some strictures on the English manner of publishing books by subscription.*

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

**Y**OU know that one of the things, on which the English value themselves most, is their regard for arts and sciences : they are perswaded, as well as all the polite nations of Europe, that as arms are the support of a state, so letters are the ornament of it, and arts one of the principal sources of its riches. In this respect let us give them all the commendations they deserve. But in doing justice to their way of thinking, I would not have ours blamed without grounds. Those who would send us to their school, cannot deny but that we first set them the example in this point. Let us not stop at the extravagant praises they lavish on them, nor at the reproaches, perhaps equally unjust and partial, which they load us with ; but let us compare, and see if there are better rewards in England  
for

for men of letters, or if they are more honoured in France.

I will not speak of the universities; their case is much the same in both countries: and if the fellowships and preferments in them are more lucrative here, it is because there are but two universities in this kingdom, and we have thirty in ours.

As to those societies now established in all parts of Europe to facilitate the progress of sciences, in England there is but the royal society of London, which perhaps is too numerous to be well composed; and for which the government is at no expence. I do not know of one pension founded here for any man of letters, except that which the *poet laureat* enjoys: and this only exposes him to the satyr and contempt of all his brethren; which is buying it dear.

In Paris we have three academies, which all equally contribute either to the glory or benefit of the sciences. We have several others established in our different provinces. I am apprized from Dijon, that a counsellor of the parliament of Burgundy has by his will lately founded a new one in a town, which glories in having given birth to several French academicians, as BOSSUET, BOUHOURS, LA MONNOIE and CREBILLON. The metropolis of the kingdom has moreover the advantage of an academy of painting and sculpture, one of architecture, and one of surgery. The academy of sciences, and that of inscriptions, have

the disposal of twenty pensions each. The king's liberality bestows several other extraordinary pensions.

In those several academies, I see prizes founded for poetry, eloquence, mathematics, history and the elegant arts. LEWIS XIV. who neglected nothing that could tend to improve them, established a school of painting at Rome, and rewards for such as signalized themselves. The prizes, which the academy of sciences gives, do not contribute less to make them flourish all over Europe, than to spread the glory of the French nation. The learned of the first rank contend for them : the EULER's and BERNOUILLI's consecrate their lucubrations towards meriting them. Will you not grant me, sir, that if the English love the sciences better than we, it is strange (I should not say it, if truth did not authorize me) that the only prizes founded here are for horse-racing.

I might in this place mention the king of France's library : tho' it be the richest collection of books in Europe, it is more remarkable on another account. The learned, to whom the care of it is committed, are so many famous men, whom the king's magnificence amply provides for, in order to communicate its treasures to the public, and encourage them to encrease it by their own productions.

Several Frenchmen will tell you, that at London FARINELLI has gained immense sums

furns in one winter; and they will tell you but the truth. Yet all this liberality of the English is but the effect of their ostentation: it is not even a proof of their taste for Italian music. At least, while they pay such high prices to those who excel in an art, that ought to appear frivolous to them; it is surprising that a gentleman, who has rendered himself so valuable in that science which they honour most, that mr. DE MOIVRE one of the greatest mathematicians in Europe, who has lived fifty years in England, has not had the least reward made him; he, I say, who, had he remained in France, would enjoy an annual pension of a thousand crowns at least in the academy of sciences.

True it is, that men of letters make much more of their works here than in France. A book which a Paris bookseller would buy for a hundred crowns, will produce two thousand at London by way of subscriptions. This is a snare, which mercenary writers have contrived to lay for the vanity of men, to force them into liberality. At the price of two or four guineas, one's name is inserted in the list of protectors of literature, and of this or that learned man in particular. Thus those authors who regard their profession purely as a mercenary art, are in the right to give the English the preference in this point: but such as have the same elevated sentiments with you, sir, think of them in a different manner.

The

The benefits which accrue to English writers from those subscriptions are much spoken of at Paris; but the humiliation that rebounds on them is not known. As much as subscriptions flatter the self-love of the great, who distinguish themselves by their generosity; so much do they mortify that of the author who receives them, unless he has the misfortune to have mean notions. He is obliged to carry his list from door to door; or, which is nearly the same thing, a pretty woman must lay the whole court under contribution to him; or leading men those of their party. Sir ROBERT WALPOLE's enemies have been taxed to a man for *Leonidas*. What can be more mortifying than thus to go begging! and is it much less, to be indebted to another for such collections?

The case is the same with regard to theatrical benefits. They produce but in proportion to the number of women of fashion a person has, who will take upon them to put off the tickets and receive the guineas. In France, an author publishes his work, and whoever is curious to see it, buys it. A play is acted, and they that will, go to it. In a word none are compelled to any meanness, which may dishonour the profession of letters.

Those numerous lists of subscribers, so much boasted of, prove nothing more, than that wealthy folks sell the protection, which 'tis thought they bestow on the learned. He whose name is set down in the front of the  
book

book for a dozen of copies, makes a figure for his pretended liberality: and the humble author seems by publishing it to receive it as alms. However that be, the English are become sensible of the abuse of subscriptions. The number and avidity of middling authors have so tired, if not drained, the generosity of real lovers of learning, that several of them have agreed never to subscribe to any book. This notice I think proper to give to such of our writers, as having bundles of their productions ready for the press might be tempted to import them into this country.

As no interest can make me disguise truth, I must not pass over in silence what does most honour to the English, and that is, to have raised some men of letters to the first employments in the ministry. Mr. ADDISON was secretary of state, and Mr. PRIOR ambassador to France. Others, as Mr. LOCKE, have been loaded with riches. Sir ISAAC NEWTON was master of the mint. I could wish the same custom obtained among us: but I will ingenuously confess, that if there are no men of letters in France, who make such fortunes, there are a much greater number pensioners to the government. At their head appears a member of your academy, equally admired for the charms of his wit, and extent of his knowledge, who first drew philosophy out of the closet, and introduced it into the world, and who has a just claim to the title of the nation's man. This great natural philosopher,  
for

for whom nature has no secrets, and who makes us admire the wisdom of the CREATOR even in the least insect, enjoys a distinguished recompence, which does no less honour to his merit than to the sovereign of whom he holds it.

I find another difference between France and England with respect to men of letters, which is, that here a greater number of them are raised to the dignities of the church. Dr. POTTER, a very learned antiquarian, is the present archbishop of Canterbury. The clergy and literature would be equal gainers, if this example were followed in France. Let us however tell the whole truth: if so many bishopricks are given to simple doctors of the universities, 'tis for want of persons of condition to ask for them. Do you think that a duke's brother would not be preferred before the best Grecian in England? But the clergy's attachment to the court renders it odious to a great part of this nation; and the different sects tolerated here have thrown such a contempt on the heads of the established church, that the nobility absolutely disdain to accept those honours.

I have known some sensible men in our country pretend, that, at least for the sake of those who take pains, it is not wrong to complain and give out that the sciences are better rewarded else-where. Thus some English politicians maintain, that whatever the conduct of the court may be, 'tis always right to  
speak

ſpeak againſt the chief perſon in power; in order to reſtrain him, if he has bad deſigns; and to keep him ſteady, if he has good. And yet I cannot ſay, if thoſe who have the diſpenſation of favours might not be rendered more friendly to the muſes, by extolling the reception they meet with from ſeveral of them. Without pointing the ſhafts of ſatyr, perſons in power may be made ſenſible, how much it is the intereſt of the ſtate and their own to protect letters. I cannot think that the right way to gain thoſe we ſtand in need of, is to begin by making them fear us.

Can arts, without ingratitude, avoid acknowledging what they owe to the care of a miniſter, who is their protector at this day, and has drawn them out of the languishing ſtate, into which they were beginning to lapſe in France? Who can, without injuſtice, deny due praiſe to him, who ſhews himſelf equally zealous for the intereſt and honour of his country, and for the glory and utility of the ſciences? Thoſe academicians, who are actually meaſuring a degree of the earth, ſome in the ſcorching heats of *Quito*, others on the benumbing ice of *Torno*, demonſtrate to all the world, and will let poſterity know the miniſter's great love, and the ſovereign's glorious protection of ſciences. How much ſoever the Engliſh are concerned in ſettling the figure of the earth; which in all probability fir ISAAC NEWTON firſt knew; and whatever advantages may accrue to navigation from the experiments

experiments now making by those learned men in two so very distant parts of the globe; I doubt the English government would never have furnished these truly royal and magnificent expences, to ascertain its real form.

Those *Literati*, who make such loud complaints, that the ministry does nothing for them, are not always the persons, whose labours are most beneficial to the state. Generally speaking, the less merit they have, the more value they set on themselves. Whatever their qualifications happen to be, thus much is certain, that the constant effect of such complaints is to render them despicable. They disclose their low mercenary views. Without mentioning a number of learned men, whose memory they dishonour, I am sorry that M. DES HOULIERES has given room for this reproach. This failing is almost an epidemical disease in the republic of letters. The most part of authors have complained of the injustice of their age; and at the bottom all those invectives which they pour forth both against fortune and their cotemporaries, are but crafty *encomiums* on their own merit, the usefulness of which their self-love makes them exaggerate. It is astonishing to see those, whom the god of riches has regarded with the most favourable eye, mixing in the choir of male-content: some in the lap of plenty murmur both against the caprice of fortune, and the injustice of the times. BAYLE had reason to say, that those complaints are pretty often rather a mark of the ingratitude of  
authors

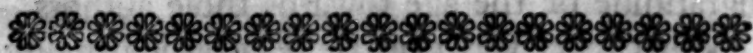
authors towards their age, than a token of the ingratitude of the age towards those authors.

What poet was ever more regarded in any nation than the great CORNEILLE was in ours! In his time the stage of the play-house was set with chairs instead of benches: he had a particular seat, which thro' respect for him no body would take. As soon as he came in, he had the same honours paid him as princes of the blood: the whole company rose to him. Are we then so barbarous, because we cannot think that literary merit is sufficient for taking a man into the privy council. The great men, with whom you are familiar, sir, are good proofs that talents are no where more honoured than in France, when they are accompanied with good morals. But what are the *Agrémens* of the wit in society, if the good qualities of the heart are wanting! Men are equally unjust and insignificant: they would fain attain the end, without taking the means. How many of those, who are made for aspiring to be taken notice of, do not always take the only means of obtaining respect, I mean honourable means! Let us go to the source of the most part of those declamations and general complaints; and we shall generally find them grounded on particular dissatisfactions: it happens frequently that men of letters do not render themselves respectable enough, and then it is that they make the loudest complaints of not being sufficiently respected.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

L E T.



## LETTER XXVI.

To Monsieur DE BUFFONS;

*On the beauties of the country of England, the richness of the soil, and industry of the inhabitants.*

NEWARK in Nottinghamshire, &amp;c.

S I R,

**I**N the heart of France you live as people live in England: the amusements of the town cease to affect you, from the moment that you have it in your power to taste those of the country. How pleasing it must be to you who love it, that the kind of study you apply to, calls you thither early in the season! It is as happy to be able to make a pleasure of business, as it is dangerous to make a business of pleasures. I suspected that I should not pass this month without receiving a letter dated at Montbard: this is the season to say: happy those who live in the country!

The poets have for these two thousand years past regretted the loss of the golden age; which I wonder at, because in my opinion it is not yet over: it exists and always will exist in the country; and you have certainly found it in the place of your present abode. This month past that I am on the banks of the  
Trent,

Trent, I relish all the sweets of that peaceable life, which constituted the happiness of our first parents. The iron age is only felt in towns ; because they are the center of detraction, envy, ambition, and perfidy. They are unknown in the country, unless they are brought there. But how many people are followed thither by a train of all vices. They live there as in town, possessed with the same cares, intoxicated with the same follies, or devoured by the same passions. Those will never know the happy days of the golden age. The iron age will pursue them every where.

As to the country in England, of which you require some account from me, till you can come and judge of it yourself ; I previously answer for the satisfaction you will some day or other have in seeing this kingdom : every thing contributes to render it equally agreeable and fertile, both the quality of the climate, and the industry of the inhabitants. After having seen Italy, you will see nothing in the buildings of London, that can give you much pleasure. That city is really wonderful only for its bigness. On the contrary whoever has eyes, must be struck with the beauties of the country, the care taken to improve lands, the richness of the pastures, the numerous flocks that cover them, and the air of plenty and cleanliness which reigns in the smallest villages. Those who do not look on England as a very fruitful country, are vastly mistaken.

The English make several millions every year of their superfluous corn.

We are difficult to be persuaded, that violent cold weather is less common here than in France; and yet it is true that the fogs, which frequently overspread this island, equally defend it from excessive heat and cold. Those thick vapours are perhaps as beneficial for the earth, as prejudicial to the health of the inhabitants. One proof that they render this climate more temperate than ours, is that several sort of trees are raised here in the open air, which in France require hot-houses. The greatest part of those of Virginia thrive very well in the neighbourhood of London. At Montbard you are obliged to put them up during the winter.

The country here to me appears always smiling, because I see it always green: yet it is not so diversified as in France. In England, except in some counties, there are neither vast plains nor high mountains. Nothing astonishes, but every thing pleases the eye. On all sides you see but little hills and rising grounds, the slope of which is as gentle as the aspect is agreeable. If the forests, which formerly covered this country, have almost entirely disappear'd, the copses and woods that crown those little hills, and the hedges that encompass the meadows and fields, give perhaps greater pleasure to the sight, and are a proof both of the richness of the soil, and of the industry of the husbandman. The vast tract

tract of land seen from the top of Richmond-hill, has more the air of an immense garden than of a country prospect. It presents the eye in some sort with an image of the terrestrial paradise.

What most contributes here to the beauty of the country, is the great number of parks and pleasant houses which adorn it. The proud Seine spreads forth stately buildings and magnificent palaces on her banks; but the Thames, less vain, tho' not less opulent, presents the eye with plain neat houses, but in so great number and such variety, that all around it forms the most charming prospects in the world. In fine, the verdure here exceeds that in France, except Normandy, which has a near resemblance to England. St. James's park pleased my eye with a colour, to which I was a stranger. 'Tis pity that this beauty should be owing to a defect, that is, to the moisture of the ground. All things well examined, every climate has its advantages, and every advantage is attended with its inconveniences. Let us comfort ourselves for inhabiting a country, not so green indeed, but much drier, and consequently more healthy.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



## L E T T E R    XXVII.

To Monsieur H \* \* \* ;

*Of that sort of melancholy which proceeds from uneasiness of mind or predominancy of passions: with an application to the hypochondriacal disposition of Englishmen.*

NEWARK, &amp;c.

S I R,

**Y**OU bear a celebrated name; and tho' you do not pursue the road of those who made it so, you will not render yourself less illustrious. Your talents will do equal honour to your native country; and if they differ from theirs, you at least resemble those virtuous citizens by the use you make of them. From your family you have derived that public spirit, which proposes the advantage of the community in all things. Like them you have nothing in view but the good of mankind. The mind has its diseases as well as the body. Men who stand in need of physicians of both sorts, have paid equal honours to HOMER and HIPPOCRATES. Those who have rendered your name famous, have applied themselves to the knowledge and cure of the diseases, to which the body is liable by its nature and the intemperance of our appetites. You labour to destroy the foibles, prejudices, errors, passions, and vices of all kinds, which  
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are the real diseases of the mind. It is also true, that you attain the same end by another way: by making mankind wiser, you prevent the physical evil, which they teach to cure. Lessons of morality are not less useful for our welfare than those of medicine. Temperance is the best preserver of health.

In the list of diseases there is one, which I think to be more your province than that of ordinary physicians: you will easily guess I mean the vapours; it is at least an evil, whose effects are as uncertain as the cause. You know, sir, they are so common in this country, that they are looked upon as contagious; and yet I have hitherto had the good fortune to stand in defiance of them with impunity: not that I have any particular secret to guard against them; but I sincerely own, that what prevents my fearing them is, that I have no faith in that opinion.

I do not pretend to deny that there are real vapours, but they are uncommon among men: nor do I speak of those which are peculiar to women, and are the effect of their particular constitutions. If the very air we breathe can have an influence on our temperament; it is not less true, that in several cases we go a great way in search of the cause of an evil, the principle of which is within us. We pity, when we ought to accuse ourselves.

The vapours I speak of, are those, which should perhaps be regarded only as a mark of a depraved imagination: I suspect that many

of those who complain of them, are less sick in body than in mind ; and that in general they more affect the head than the stomach or nervous system.

In the greatest part of the men vapours are nothing but violent uneasiness : and I own that uneasiness is the most cruel of all distempers. The soul and body act mutually and necessarily on each other. In this sense the vapoured have reason to complain : for no creatures can be more unhappy. But they will not confess that they are uneasy, for fear of discovering a fault in their mind, or an irregularity in their appetites. By the disease they affect, they surprize our pity ; whereas a confession of the truth would but mortify their self-love. We derive a sort of vanity from our unhappiness, but we are always secretly ashamed of our defects. At least we had rather appear sick than foolish ; and some grains of folly may possibly be an ingredient in the most part of vapours. This was monsieur CHIRAC's opinion. That great physician, equally incapable of flattering the madness of a man, and of mistaking a disorder of the mind for a bodily disease, one day found himself hard pressed by a person troubled with vapours of this sort, who had been a long while teizing him for a remedy for this pretended ill. M. CHIRAC, put to his shifts, answered with a severity inherent to his character, that the only remedy he had to recommend to him, was to go and assassinate some body on the high-

high-way, and then take post and drive out of the kingdom, if he thought fit. That other physician, who made another hypochondriacal man take horse, and ride out every morning three leagues from Paris, and there drink small phials of river water carefully disguised, and which he perswaded him was a wonderful medicine against his disease; did he not treat his patient as children are treated, who are not to be cured without deceiving them on the nature of the medicines given them?

Here every thing confirms me in my opinion. People of moderate appetites, who enjoy all things without being over-linked to any; and blockheads who have the happy gift of tiring every body without ever being uneasy themselves, are not subject to vapours. On the contrary witty people, and lively tempers, by an excessive indulgence of pleasures of what kind soever, soon wear out their thinking faculty; and unless they have a taste for some simple amusements to fill up the vacant hours of their lives, they insensibly lapse into an uneasiness that devours them. This is what in France is called vapours, and in England the spleen, a disease which makes so many of the English quit the island. It is observable even here, that neither the country labourers, nor the working tradesmen are subject to it; and that it chooses to dwell only in the bosom of idleness and opulence: which furnishes us with the best idea of its real cause. And for this reason mr. LOCKE, in his treatise

on education, after enumerating the several qualifications of a young gentleman; looking on exercise considered purely in itself as necessary to health, says: *I would have him learn a trade, a manual trade.* The emperor CHARLES the Great, with great wisdom, ordered the same method to be followed with regard to his children.

This disease, so indifferently known both to the patients and their physicians, is nothing but an inactivity of soul. And as medicines put the humours of the body in motion, so variety of occupations are spurs to the soul, which rouse it out of this lethargy. When the person has not sufficient power over himself to use these spurs, assistance must be called in. In this languid state, exterior force must supply the defect of our weakness, and make us act even against our will. The soul has its resistance to changes, as well as the body; and this resistance may be called *vis inertiae*, as it is when it relates to matter. This is the predominant cause of vapours, and is the most difficult obstacle to be surmounted in the cure. All men have a tendency to laziness, and the laziness of philosophers is to do nothing but what they relish: and if their taste happens to be cloy'd, they are in great danger of gradually falling into a total indolence.

Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE in his *observations upon the united provinces of the Netherlands* observes, that *strangers among them are apt to complain of the spleen, but those of the country seldom*

*Seldom or never. This, says he, is a disease too refined for this country and people, who are well, when they are not ill; and pleased, when they are not troubled.\** MONTAGNE has likewise shewn how much happier the condition of working men frequently is than that of the rest of mankind. *The labourer, says he, is not ill, but when he is really so. When distempers fail us, knowledge furnishes us with some of its own invention.* Vapours are more common in England than in other places; because it is the country where there is the greatest number of people who indulge uneasiness and anxiety, and give themselves up earliest and with the most eagerness to all sorts of excess.

Besides the general cause of this disease, there are several particular causes. Contracting a ridiculous marriage, losing considerable sums at play, ruining ones self by building, missing an employment; among us being disgraced at court, but here seeing a minister prosper: are pretty frequently the causes of melancholic disorders. All Paris have been witness to the folly of a certain man, from a very slender patrimony having made an immense fortune in the time of the Mississippi scheme, could not bear to be reduced in the end to an estate of fifty thousand livres a year. It threw him into a jaundice, which lasted two years.\* The man

\* Temple's works, Vol. I. p. 54.

\* The author of the life of Epictetus relates, that a man came one day in great distress, and threw himself at the feet of his

man the most subject to vapours that I ever knew, was never troubled with violent fits but when he wanted money. They encreased or diminished according to his stock of cash : so that his purse was the infallible thermometer of his disease. The evening preceding the strongest paroxysm he ever felt, he had lost two hundred louis at Pharo.

As vapours are commoner here than in France, it is also probable that they are of longer standing. You know that they were not taken notice of among us till about the beginning of the last century. LE VASSOR in his history of LOUIS XIII. says, that as soon as the king thought himself attacked by them, some effeminate courtiers, and wits of the circle and bed-chamber brought them into vogue. What, distempers in vogue! Most certainly; and indeed to what extravagance does not the madness of affecting fine airs carry the greatest part of mankind! However, the progress of this evil could not be very rapid at first. BOILEAU's commentator, in his notes on the eighth satyr, assures us that when that piece was composed, there were no other vapours known but among the ladies, and that the men did not as yet dream of being seized with

his master Epaphroditus, who was captain of Nero's guards, most bitterly bewailing his ill fortune, which had reduced him to a hundred and fifty thousand pieces for all wordly substance. To which Epaphroditus answered : *O miserable man ! how have you concealed, how have borne this so long ?* Upton's Arrian, Vol. 1. p. 135.

with them : which is a proof, that they were not very common about the middle of that century. You see it is now so far otherwise, that there is scarcely any distemper more universal in Paris : people of all ranks and conditions are infected by them. From the courtier they have passed to the citizen, and from the wit to the bookseller. Nay they begin to spread in the capital towns of our provinces, into which the intendants have imported them.

This disease is called the disease of sensible and witty people; and this is a sufficient reason that I am not surprized at the progress it has made in an age when every body pretends to good sense and wit : the case would be quite altered, if it was called the disease of disordered minds. It is true at least, that in England, as well as in France, persons troubled with vapours, or who fancy themselves so, are vain of being subject to them. They endeavour to make us regard them as a sort of tribute they pay to nature for a gift, which she bestows on none but her favourites. A vapoured man, who would fain make me a convert to this doctrine, said to me one day : " Sir, you  
 " have no faith in vapours, because you do  
 " not comprehend them : HIPPOCRATES did  
 " not comprehend them more than you, and  
 " yet he believed them : for he says that there  
 " is somewhat divine, θεῶν τι, in that dis-  
 " ease." This imaginary sick man had learnt those two Greek words from a physician, who,  
 in

in order to continue him in his madness, took pleasure in flattering his self-love. And he would willingly follow the example of the avaritious man, by engraving them in gold letters on his chimney-piece. For indeed how can one avoid being proud of a disease that has somewhat divine in it! But raillery a part, they pride in it at London as much as at Paris. Nay they go farther here; for they in a manner advertise it publickly. Had I no other token to know a vapoured man by, my smelling faculty alone would suffice. *Asa fœtida* is regarded in England as a remedy against vapours; tho' perhaps it is no more than a sign hung out. However that may be, those here, who believe they labour under this evil, make great use of it: some take it pulverized instead of snuff, others wear bags of it on the pit of the stomach; as I have seen some simple credulous folks in France, wear little bags of remedies against the apoplexy. Whoever would aspire to the honour of being thought vapoured, must accustom himself to this stench. I have observed, that the ladies bring themselves to it more easily, and make greater use of it than the men.

Most vapoured people, like him, whom MOLIERE has painted in his *malade imaginaire*, are out of humour, when a person will not give credit to their complaints. I have seen one of them put himself in as great a passion, upon being told that he had the appearance of being in health, as if he had been told

told that he had the air of a villain. Unhappily those who are thus affected, find but too many quack-doctors, whose interest it is to uphold them in their error ; and who have less regard for real patients that die, or recover, than for those sick in imagination, who live long, and are never cured. *They are ordered, says MONTAGNE, bleeding, purging, and other medicines for ills, which they feel only in their discourse.* MOLIERE, who painted all his characters after nature, was sometimes obliged to over-do them, in order to their making the deeper impression on the audience : but this is not the case with his *malade imaginaire* ; I am acquainted with some more ridiculous characters of that sort.

But, as the author of that play does not attack true physicians, whose merit he acknowledges ; neither do I pretend, I here repeat it, to point at some few real and involuntary hypochondriacs, whom I sincerely pity ; but at the greater number, who work themselves up to this disorder by the irregularity of their mind. I attack but the diseases of the imagination, which it is in the power of reason to cure, if they would make trial of its remedies : and yet I pity more than condemn them. Whether it be, that bodily pain disturbs the peace of the mind, or the troubles of the mind disorder the constitution of the body ; we suffer, and whatever be the cause, we are unhappy. What a fatal gift is the mind, when instead of tempering the bitters of life, it serves only

only to poison its sweets! Equally weak in some respects, and blind in others, if on one hand we fear every thing as mortals, on the other we wish for all things as if we were immortal.

The caprice and immoderate desires of men make them incessantly find thorns, where they should gather roses. By too much giving ourselves up to pleasures, we are making preparations for certain remorse: and the least risque we run, is to become insensible; and from that instant we no longer live, we only languish. On the contrary, to be content with the state we are placed in; to fulfill to our utmost the duties of society; to enjoy pleasures without running into excess; to arm ourselves with prudence against misfortunes which may befall us; to comfort ourselves, when we have not been able to prevent them; to have recourse to exercise and other employments, in order to forget them: such are the true means to prevent or cure vapours. If in this distemper the chief pains of the body are occasioned purely by the affections of the mind; labouring at the cure of the mind, is striking at the root of the evil. Man would be happy, if he knew the value of his reason: it is an universal remedy. I have nevertheless so good an opinion of human nature, to believe that reason will one time or other get the better of this disease; and that in some future age it will be treated as a mere ridicule, which fashion had rendered contagious.

In

In fine, there is a great difference between English and French vapours : for the fits are here more or less violent according to the winds. Autumn, and dark cloudy weather, are very dangerous for those who have the imagination ever so little byass'd towards melancholy. A news-writer giving an account of several Englishmen who had killed themselves, observed pleasantly, that the thing was the more extraordinary, as the season for suicide was not yet come. Whether weakness or courage, it is too true that uneasiness makes several of the English put themselves to death. SENECA places it among the causes, which sometimes render death desirable. *Think, says he, how long you have been doing the same thing over.\** A gentleman of my acquaintance killed himself, to avoid the trouble of dressing and undressing every day. If so many of the English take such fatal resolutions, possibly the government may be partly in fault. This kind of ferocity is in esteem with them : and liberty is allowed to dangerous writers to praise it as a national virtue. Thus prejudice confounds virtues and vices ; and what can be no more than a proof of folly, is esteemed a mark of courage. People whom we stile Barbarians, tho' wiser in this respect at least, suffer not the dead body of the person who has destroyed

\* Cogita quamdiu jam idem facias. Cibus, somnus, libido, per hunc circulum curritur. Mori velle non tantum et fortis aut miser, sed et fastidiosus potest.

stroy'd himself, to be carried out thro' the door of the house : they make a breach in the wall, and bury it without any ceremony. If religion raises its voice in vain, policy ought to employ all its resources to prevent such attempts. Let us boast less of the politeness of our European manners : the savages are frequently our masters in morality.

The importance of the subject has made me assume a more serious tone than I could have wished : vapours require another, and I return to it. In general, great complaints are made here of the influence of the winds, and those from the eastward are not at all relished. If a person has visits to make, he would do well to consult the weather-cock, which governs many a head in this country : otherwise he is in danger of being ill received. This precaution is more necessary still, if he is in expectation of any favours from the ministry or great men. One day a gentleman had a place to ask, and the minister had been powerfully solicited in his favour. He set out from his house with the most favourable wind that could blow : but on his way the wind happened to change, and blew off all his hopes.

You, who love every thing from this country, will not perhaps be sorry that I add to this letter a piece of waggery which has some relation to it, and is attributed to one of the greatest wits in England.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

C A-

*Catholicon aureum, basilicum;*

O R

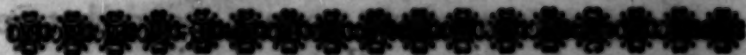
## THE ROYAL GOLDEN SPECIFIC.

“ THIS remedy is so well known in all  
 “ the courts of Europe, and so  
 “ highly esteemed by all the nobility and great  
 “ men of this kingdom, for its miraculous  
 “ virtues in all hypochondriacal and hysterical  
 “ diseases, that it is justly regarded as the u-  
 “ niversal medicine. For it infallibly cures all  
 “ sorts of spleen, vapours, melancholy, &c.  
 “ tho’ ever so inveterate, and from whatever  
 “ cause the disorder proceeds; whether from  
 “ ill health, indigestion, acrid and bilious hu-  
 “ mours, or from a gloomy melancholic dis-  
 “ position of the mind; or in fine from mis-  
 “ fortunes occasioned either by unforeseen ac-  
 “ cidents, or by play, luxury and extrava-  
 “ gance. In all those cases this wonderful  
 “ remedy procures certain and speedy ease to  
 “ the patient, by rectifying the juices, purify-  
 “ ing the blood, and helping digestion; so  
 “ that a mind heretofore plunged into dismal  
 “ thoughts, and tortured with continual fears  
 “ and frights, in a moment gives itself up to  
 “ quite contrary ideas, which renew the  
 “ whole animal œconomy, gladden the heart,  
 Vol. I. O “ warm

“ warm the imagination, procure agreeable  
“ dreams, and keep up the course of the ani-  
“ mal spirits in a constant uniform degree of  
“ vivacity. In a word, it cures all persons,  
“ as by a sort of enchantment, of those trou-  
“ bles of mind, which occasion a gloomy  
“ melancholic way of thinking; and re-esta-  
“ blishes them in a state of serenity, good hu-  
“ mour and gaiety. It is very pleasing to the  
“ palate, and may be taken without the know-  
“ ledge of the most intimate friend, or even  
“ of those who partake of the same bed and  
“ board with the patient. Doctor ROBERT  
“ KING, who has obtained a patent for it,  
“ is the only person who dispences it at his  
“ house in Piccadilly, over against Arlington-  
“ street; where he may be consulted on those  
“ disorders every morning from eight o'clock  
“ to twelve, but at no other hours, unless it  
“ be upon very extraordinary cases.

“ N.B. Such as will apply to the doctor at  
“ the place above specified, may receive more  
“ ample information concerning the virtues of  
“ this medicine, and the great number of  
“ cures it has performed; together with the  
“ names and directions of several persons, who  
“ are ready to certify the truth thereof.”

LETTER



LETTER XXVIII.

To the Marquis Du T\*\*.

*On some inconveniencies of the political constitution of England.*

NORTHAMPTON, &c.

MY LORD,

**T**H O' I have already spent upwards of eight months in London, the smog and fogs have not suffered me to see that town. I return to it on purpose to satisfy my curiosity; and I will besides take the advantage of the fine season to visit all the adjacent places with care. This is the time for making such a tour: the country is smiling, and the verdure is in full beauty.

You desire me to apprise you of every thing relating to the manners of this nation, and you take pleasure in combining them with their laws, and in judging from particular facts of the influence of the political government on the different orders of the people. An incident that has befallen me this day may possibly afford matter for your reflections.

I am in one of the best towns in England for good inns, and yet I am lodged in one of the worst of the whole county ; and that only because I met upon the road with a peer of the realm, who was going to London as well as I, and desired that we might make the rest of the journey together : which I easily consented to, without the least suspicion that I should pay so dear for the honour of his lordship's company.

Here each party has its particular inns : and if a member of parliament is in the opposition to the court, he is under a necessity of going to an inn of his party, or he is a lost man : for either they would believe he had turned coat, or they would turn it for him. In this country, the children in all conditions of life suck the spirit of party with their milk. They have scarcely learned to speak, when they are taught the terms of *corruption* and *opposition*, by which they now denote the different parties, which were not long since characterised by the odious names of whig and tory.

My fellow traveller was much better off than I : for finding the wine bad, he had recourse to the beer ; and the fowl proving hard, he revenged himself on the pudding, which was soft enough. But I, who am not seasoned to this gross food, and drink little or no beer ; I who am neither of the party of corruption nor opposition, neither whig nor tory, what business had I in this wretched house ?

This

This is not all: I saw the moment when I thought that our inn-keeper's hatred to the ministry would give him a right to sit down at table with us. We were obliged at least to drink out of the same pot with him to his health, and to the healths of all those of the town of Northampton, who were enemies to sir ROBERT WALPOLE, (against whom I have not the least subject of complaint) and friends to our land-lord, with whom you see I have no great reason to be in love. And what is still worse, I was under a necessity of listening to the reasoning of this zealous partisan of the *opposition*. My travelling companion had the politeness to entertain him during the whole supper time: for it was not the inn-keeper that made court to my lord, but my lord to the inn-keeper. This last exclaimed bitterly against the corruption of the ministry, and the remissness of the parliament. My lord used his utmost endeavours to excuse the conduct of his party to our political inn-keeper, and to persuade him that they constantly did all that was possible to be done in the present circumstances. *No, my lord*, replied he in a passion, *they do not. If I was a member of parliament, as you are; all place-men should be expelled, and the militia should be broke, or, upon my honour, I would set fire to the four corners of the city of London.*

Thereupon he wished us a good night, and departed in great wrath. As soon as he was gone: Sir, said my fellow traveller, you must

not be surprized at all this. In this country we are obliged to manage all sorts of people, in order to keep up our credit in the county. This fellow, notwithstanding his appearance, is rich : and as rude and brutal as he is, he passes for an honest man, and is taken notice of ; he is of greater importance here than you can well imagine : his vote at elections constantly guides those of all his neighbours.

Moreover, it is not upon the road only, that those gentlemen are exposed to pay for their party zeal. At their country seats they daily suffer this sort of tyranny. Those who aspire to become considerable, and will not make their court to the king, are under a necessity of making it the people. For example to a member of parliament, who is in the opposition, is obliged to buy all his provisions from people of his party, let their goods be ever so bad : if any of his servants bought a single pound of sugar from a grocer who is on the minister's side, the master would be looked on as a false brother, and would lose all his interest. This is a capital point, and the masters must watch their servants very narrowly, to prevent their committing so heinous a crime. And yet from thence it happens, that your tradesman takes the advantage of his exclusive privilege, and sells you the worst of goods, and always at the highest prizes.

I am acquainted with a person of fortune, who, in order to preserve his credit in a neighbouring town, was for a long time forc'd to suffer

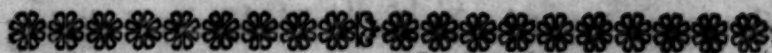
suffer himself to be crippled by a shoemaker, who was a great bufler at elections, but made very bad shoes for those, to whom he sold his vote. This shoemaker was an enemy to the court and of the high church; but of unshakable fidelity to his party. The gentleman tired at length with being so wretchedly shod, was obliged, in order to keep him in tune, to have recourse to an expedient: and that was, to continue to take shoes of him, which he gave to his footmen, and at the same time to order others to be made for his own wear by a shoemaker of the court party.

It is true, fir, that these are things which do not happen among us; they are originals with which we are unacquainted. But those inconveniencies are attended with essential advantages, of which we are deprived: however thus much is certain, that in France we shoe ourselves to our fancy; and when on the road, we are at liberty to choose those inns, where we meet with the best treatment.

I have the honour to be,

My lord,

Your lordship's most humble, &c.



## LETTER XXIX.

To Monsieur DE LA CHAUSSEE;

*On foppery; and inclosing the copy of a letter from an English gentleman at Paris to my lord C \* \* \*, which gives a lively portraiture of French politeness.*

LONDON, &c.

S I R,

I Could wish, says mr. ADDISON in one of his papers, for the honour of the nation, that the parliament made an act, to prohibit the exportation of fools. As I have not the honour of my country less at heart, I am sorry that such a law has not been made among us: and I do not mean such simpletons only, who want to buy the wind, in order to make a voyage, and who take cats for familiar devils.\* There are many different sorts of fools. But the most contemptible of all, and unhappily the most common among us, are those whose assurance is equal to their folly. People here are much pleased with seeing a Frenchman of this character: the less he is esteemed, the more he is sought after: and they are rejoiced to find particular instances, to justify the contempt they

\* Voyage des pays septentrionaux, by Martiniere.

they have for the whole nation ; and he who has stupidity enough to be flattered with this reception, does not see that it is equally dishonourable to himself and insulting to his country. It must be acknowledged, that our Petits-maitres are very extravagant. The author above-mentioned gives in another place the anatomy of one of these odd creatures : he pretends that the Petit-maitre is the only individual of our species, whose head is without brains. The Petit-maitre of our days has never been better painted, in my opinion, than in the *Fat puni*. I have read this small play with great pleasure, and have found it to be the true portrait of those insignificant men, equally envied by silly blockheads, and despised by sensible people, and who gain the good opinion of such women only, as resemble them. To this I annex a letter lately written to my lord C \* \* \*, wherein they are not spared. The lecture will most certainly prove disagreeable to them, and yet they stand in great want of it. 'Tis the same case with the best medicines: their bitterness must be borne, in favour of their salutary virtues. The censure, which you are going to read, has not perhaps less of justness than of sharpness: and I ask you, sir, who are so well acquainted with our manners, if they have not wherewithal to scandalize an honest Englishman, who makes true politeness consist in never giving offence ; and who

ac-

acknowledges no other rule of behaviour in life, but that of fulfilling his duties.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

*A LETTER from an English gentleman at Paris, to my lord C \* \* \* ; giving a lively portraiture of the foppery, impudence and debauchery, which constitute French politeness.*

MY LORD,

“ I Know not what the French think of  
 “ me, nor what you will say of them  
 “ or me presently; but I own to your lord-  
 “ ship, that my residence at Paris begins to  
 “ be so tiresome, that I cannot stand it much  
 “ longer. The manners and way of think-  
 “ ing of this country are quite insupportable.  
 “ I cannot accustom myself to wit, of which  
 “ good sense is not the basis; nor content  
 “ myself with amiable qualities, where the es-  
 “ sential ones are wanting. Is this the bright  
 “ and polite nation, which we take for our  
 “ model at this day? May heaven preserve  
 “ us, my lord, from ever resembling them!

“ In vain do I study at court that politeness,  
 “ which is so loudly boasted of: the simpli-  
 “ city, or if you please, the bluntness of my  
 “ character will not comply. I should be a  
 “ loser by a change of manners. Tho’ the  
 “ French customs creep on us, and that our  
 “ morals are every day more and more cor-  
 “ rupt; I still think as our forefathers did:  
 “ it is better to retain imperfections, than to

“ ex-

“ exchange them for vices. That haughti-  
“ ness and sort of ferocity, of which we are  
“ accused, bring on fewer inconveniencies in  
“ the commerce of life, than knavery and  
“ falseness of heart, which take up such love-  
“ ly outsidcs in this country. Your French  
“ politeness is but a false modesty, a disguised  
“ pride, in a word, but a troublesome mask,  
“ which mankind put on with the sole in-  
“ tention of deceiving each other. If it does  
“ not become an honest man to impose, it  
“ becomes not a rational man to suffer him-  
“ self to be imposed on.

“ In France, the courtier, whose meanness  
“ even surpasses his politeness, waiting on a  
“ person in a great employment, seems to be  
“ ignorant of what he owes to himself: with  
“ every body else, he is so full of himself, that  
“ one would be apt to think, that the man ex-  
“ ists not, to whom he has any obligations.  
“ The care he takes to prevent your seeing a  
“ certain superiority, which he ascribes to him-  
“ self without any real title to it, is precisely  
“ what he calls politeness. And you would  
“ have me be obliged to him for what is but  
“ the effect of the most presumptuous pride.

“ This is the country of wit, with all my  
“ heart: all Frenchmen have wit, I am wil-  
“ ling to believe it: and sure it must be so,  
“ since they have perswaded other nations of  
“ it. If any thing ever resembled the epide-  
“ mic disease of the people of Abdera, it is  
“ the wit which the French have at present.

“ Men,

“ Men, women, every body here value them-  
“ selves on it : their books are nothing but  
“ wit, their conversation nothing else ; and  
“ in this respect as in all others, 'tis the court  
“ that sets the example. But how extraordi-  
“ nary this example appears to me, and how  
“ disgusting it is to English good sense ! And  
“ indeed even among the French, it is not the  
“ reasonable people that set it. What distin-  
“ guishes this country from others, is not per-  
“ haps, that it contains more or less sensible  
“ people, but that, whatever the number be,  
“ they are reckoned as nothing. The wo-  
“ men, who give out the fashions, receive  
“ them from young fellows, the greatest part  
“ of whom are of such gross ignorance as  
“ ought to make men blush, who have the hap-  
“ piness to be born superior to others. Wit,  
“ which has not been cultivated, seldom produ-  
“ ces any thing but impertinence and ridicules.

“ I know not what is become of that gal-  
“ lantry which formerly reigned among the  
“ French : it seems to have gone off with the  
“ taste of CYRUS and the CLELIA'S. That  
“ of the present time is in the strain of their  
“ modern romances ; it is that of libertinism,  
“ which does not even take the pains to dis-  
“ guise itself. Among this light inconstant  
“ people, their very morals are subject to the  
“ caprice of the mode. It is now a long time  
“ since it has been quite unfashionable in any  
“ body above a cit to love his wife. The  
“ rules of the polite air are become more se-  
“ vere still : they do not even allow a man

“ to

“ to love his mistress. A fine gentleman  
“ would think he had lost all his reputation,  
“ if he was suspected of so great a weakness.  
“ And some there are, who carry the scruple  
“ so far, that they make their valets de cham-  
“ bre write their love-letters, for fear of giv-  
“ ing occasion to obloquy. It would be a se-  
“ vere stroke to a courtier, that a woman of  
“ the Marais \* could produce one of his let-  
“ ters. They have banished all courtship and  
“ complaisance, as old-fashion'd customs: in  
“ a word, 'tis love itself that appears ridicu-  
“ lous to them; and in the present language  
“ the word love no longer conveys the idea  
“ of a passion, its literal signification is an  
“ intrigue.

“ Formerly it was a piece of gallantry to  
“ wear the livery of the beauty, to whom a  
“ person addressed his homage: and it could  
“ be done without any reflection on her ho-  
“ nour; because in reality he declared him-  
“ self her slave. At this day, by an indiscre-  
“ tion in which both sexes have an equal share,  
“ several Petits-maitres point out the woman  
“ who honours them with her favours, by the  
“ sort of powder which they use: and there  
“ are people who pretend to trail the new  
“ intrigues of those gentlemen by the scent of  
“ their perfumes. This woman, they say, is  
“ known to love cyprus powder, that other  
“ cannot endure any but the powder *à la*  
“ Ma-

\* A trading part of Paris.

“ *Marechale* : and a third gives the preference  
 “ to amber-greese. Thus a sprightly Petit-  
 “ maitre, by daily changing his perfumes,  
 “ publishes at the same time the inconstancy  
 “ of his taste, and the rapidity of his con-  
 “ quests.

“ Those places become so much in fashion  
 “ by the name of little private lodges, and  
 “ which one would be apt to think were in-  
 “ tended for secrecy, are on the contrary de-  
 “ stined to make the dishonour of women  
 “ public. They are frequently kept for va-  
 “ nity rather than necessity. Some degree of  
 “ constraint is perhaps necessary in love : at  
 “ least, excess of freedom makes it degenerate  
 “ into libertinism ; and this is the effect of  
 “ these private lodges. A woman cannot come  
 “ there, without making a declaration of her  
 “ own accord, which ought always to be ex-  
 “ torted from her. And indeed to how ma-  
 “ ny other indiscretions is she not exposed  
 “ by the Petit-maitre, who prevails on her to  
 “ come thither ? If he admits a finger to his  
 “ table, it is not so much to divert the lady  
 “ with the charms of his voice, as to have a  
 “ witness who may divulge his happiness to  
 “ the world.

“ The French upbraid us with not being  
 “ fond enough of women, because we live  
 “ less familiarly with them than they : but  
 “ perhaps their manner of living with them  
 “ is not a proof of greater fondness for the sex.  
 “ In England a woman would not think her-  
 “ self

“ self beloved, if she was not respected :  
 “ the Frenchwomen do not seem so scrupu-  
 “ lous. How have they been able to accu-  
 “ stom themselves to the vain-glorious airs of  
 “ court-coxcombs, who would blush to pur-  
 “ chase their defeat, and who only seek to  
 “ triumph over them, in order to sooth their  
 “ own vanity, and to dishonour the altar on  
 “ which they have offered sacrifice ?

“ True it is, that there are certain complai-  
 “ sant mortals in another state of life, who  
 “ submit to be tied like slaves to the lady’s  
 “ car, and whom she makes pay for the ob-  
 “ ject of the courtier’s disdain by great sub-  
 “ missions and respects. The leavings of a  
 “ duke are always very costly to a man of the  
 “ long robe.

“ The title of a lucky man is all that tempts  
 “ the Petits-maitres of these days, and all they  
 “ seek. And frequently the bare reputation  
 “ of it suffices. The shadow serves them in-  
 “ stead of the reality. They are happy in their  
 “ own minds, if they can but appear so ; and  
 “ in order to succeed, they sometimes act ve-  
 “ ry ridiculous farces.

“ One of them orders his horses to be put  
 “ to, for a sham mysterious assignation ; and  
 “ an hour afterwards sneaks home on foot,  
 “ and enters by the back door, goes up the  
 “ back stairs to his apartment, and quietly  
 “ eats a chicken in a private manner ; while  
 “ his equipage scandalizes the whole neigh-  
 “ bourhood, at the end of a street where some

“ cele-

“ celebrated beauty dwells. Another goes to  
“ sup alone at his little lodge, and has sky-rock-  
“ kets play'd off, to give notice to his neigh-  
“ bours of a happiness which he enjoys not.  
“ One of those sparks has very ingenuously  
“ owned to me, that he is indebted to such  
“ artifices for the first rise of his reputation ;  
“ and that afterwards this reputation, so craf-  
“ tily established, obtained him the conquest  
“ of several women. That he did not stop,  
“ like those abovementioned, at the shadow  
“ of happiness : it was a meditated philoso-  
“ phical system of gallantry, which he had  
“ built upon a great knowledge of the tem-  
“ pers of women and of his nation. He  
“ knew that in this country a person is what-  
“ ever he has a mind to be. If he would be  
“ thought a wit, 'tis but saying he is ; to pass  
“ for a man of taste, it suffices to talk of  
“ things of taste ; and a proper stock of fop-  
“ pery and impudence sets him up for a lucky  
“ man. This spark having had the address  
“ to persuade the public that he had this or  
“ that lady, who did not so much as know  
“ him, has thereby had several others, which  
“ otherwise would never have known him.  
“ The whole art consists in gaining two  
“ or three of the most celebrated : the rest  
“ fall of themselves. They find their self-  
“ love concerned. According to the rules  
“ of modern gallantry, whatever merit a wo-  
“ man has, she will rather make the first ad-  
“ vances, than fail of binding to her car, for  
“ a

“ a week at least, the person whom the rest  
“ of the sex have cryed up. The men have  
“ just the same notions : it matters not whe-  
“ ther a woman be handsome or ugly ; if my  
“ lord duke has had her, this is a sufficient  
“ motive for all the young fellows, who are  
“ starting into the world, to follow her. This  
“ is precisely the manner in which things pass  
“ here, and the strain in which the fine gentle-  
“ men talk. They generally live with the sex  
“ without any tie ; or, which is still worse,  
“ they are tied to them without any esteem.  
“ At this day the Frenchwomen think that  
“ it concerns their honour to be gallant : and  
“ of this they are so fully convinced, that they  
“ are willing to appear so, even when they  
“ are otherwise inclined : for some there are,  
“ to whom I must render this justice, and  
“ who have lovers purely for the interest of  
“ their beauty. The care of their reputation  
“ obliged them formerly to keep their intri-  
“ gues secret ; the same motive lays them un-  
“ der a necessity at present to make them  
“ public. And for this reason it is, that in  
“ public walks and diversions they affect to be  
“ seen with the man, who vouchsafes to e-  
“ stem himself honoured by their favours.  
“ 'Tis the men that begin to shew some signs  
“ of delicacy in this point.  
“ The French ladies have set themselves so  
“ far above all prejudices, that they scruple  
“ not to keep company with the greatest li-  
“ bertine, provided he can contrive to throw  
“ Vol. I. P the

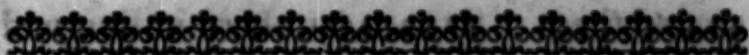
“ the veil of talents over his libertinism : those  
“ women who profess a way of life, which  
“ frees them from the yoke of decency, have  
“ entrance every where on the same condition.  
“ Some of the sex assume an authority  
“ from the presence of these creatures, to  
“ compleat the work of demolishing all the  
“ barriers of modesty ; others tho’ really virtuous,  
“ yet drawn in by example, regard  
“ certain amusements innocent, of which they  
“ do not see the danger ; which nevertheless  
“ suppose a general depravity of morals. The  
“ gallant ladies of this country lay claim to  
“ philosophy ; and it must be allowed that they  
“ carry it a great way : but unhappily as they  
“ lead the rest of the sex, they have at length  
“ prevailed to bring their licentiousness in fashion,  
“ as well as their dress. Now, what  
“ has been the consequence in France of this  
“ free commerce of the two sexes ? An exchange  
“ of their vices, which equally dishonours them both.  
“ The men have at present all the effeminacy of women,  
“ and the women have taken up the impudence of men.

“ Such are, my lord, the sweet and polite,  
“ but perhaps less so than corrupt, manners,  
“ which you regret in England. I should be  
“ very sorry to have brought my wife hither,  
“ as your lordship advised me to do. Notwithstanding  
“ the high opinion I have of her virtue and character,  
“ the sex is frail, and bad example is always contagious. I intend to  
“ be

“ be in London next month ; and I return  
 “ with joy to a country, where politeness and  
 “ fashionable precedents do not oblige a man  
 “ to quit a woman, who frequently has no o-  
 “ ther defect but that of being entirely his  
 “ own ; in order to live with another, who  
 “ possibly has no other merit but that of hav-  
 “ ing belonged to every body.

“ I am, my lord,

“ Your lordship's most humble, &c.



## LETTER XXX.

To the Abbé SALLIER,

Keeper of the king's library, member of the French A-  
 cademy, and of that of Inscriptions and Belles-lettres ;

*Containing a new method of investigating the  
 great question on the comparative magnitude  
 of London and Paris.*

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

**I**T is daily disputed at London and Paris,  
 which of the two cities is the most popu-  
 lous.\* I have read an English comedy, the  
 subject of which is the examination of this im-  
 portant question. There is a history of Lon-

P 2

don

\* Sir William Petty, in his political arithmetick, pretends  
 that London is bigger than Paris and Rouen put together. The  
 number of the inhabitants is generally computed at abo  
 million. The city of London pays the seventh part at least a  
 the expences of the government.

don actually in the press, which is to make several volumes in folio, and will possibly clear it up: I send you the first sheets, which are just come out. The warmth with which both parties dispute this frivolous advantage, has something in it ridiculous enough to the eyes of a philosopher; as if a man were really more or less valuable for being born in a greater or lesser town. But men are generally so little of themselves, that, in order to be of some consequence, they call in the help of every thing around them. SALMASIUS born in Burgundy in the village, from which he took his name, was scarcely known, when he pretended to be of Semur: \* but when he became famous, he absolutely insisted on being of the capital city of the province. In several respects, some learned men are quite as little as the rest of mankind. Such weaknesses cannot affect those who have your philosophical turn of mind: you know that good sense and folly are of all countries. Human society is but a mixture of virtues and vices. There is no country, which would not deem it an honour to adopt you; and as I am not indifferent to that of my native province, I congratulate it, upon your having there suck'd with your milk that taste for learning, which has since given you so distinguished a rank in the republic of letters.

London disdains not to be the rival of Paris: but *the metropolis of the British empire* (thus it is stiled by several authors) pretends to have the

\* A small town in Burgundy.

the superiority over *the first city of France* by the number of its inhabitants : and as far as I can judge, its pretensions are well grounded. I will not alledge in proof, that they reckon a hundred and thirty-three parishes in it, and that there are but fifty-seven in Paris. Nor do I stop at the totals of the yearly bills of births and burials in both cities : the difference observed therein may possibly proceed from the great number of sea-faring people on the Thames, the greatest part of whom ought rather to be regarded as passengers than inhabitants. The foundation, on which I build, is quite of a different kind ; it is, that the corruption of morals, especially among the common people, is carried much farther in London than in Paris. It is a sad, but true, observation, that libertinism, debauches and all sorts of vice are the inheritance of great cities, and that the more populous they are, the more corrupt : upon examining this proposition inverted, perhaps it will be found, that the more corrupt they are, the more populous they must be.

However, it must be allow'd that another cause contributes to this great depravity of morals ; which is the extreme licentiousness that reigns here, perhaps as a necessary consequence of the political constitution. In France we have a police, the regularity of which descends to the lowest particulars that can be of use to the community ; and of which an immense people feel the happy effects without

knowing all its value, but which even strangers are forced to admire. At London, there is neither police, order nor subordination. The common people here are seldom restrained by the laws, the great are not always by decency: in a word the profession of vice is as public as any reputable profession.

About twelve years ago, some well-intentioned persons here formed themselves into a society of a singular kind; their view was the reformation of manners of this great city. They obliged themselves to prosecute at their own expence all such as offend against the laws divine or human: and for that purpose they had hireling spies in every part of the town, to inform against the offenders. Unluckily one of this society committed a murder soon after, and thus it fell almost into contempt in its infancy. However, there are still some worthy souls, who use their utmost endeavours to re-establish its credit. The chief occupation of this society at present is to publish works of piety and morality, to serve as an antidote to infidelity and licentiousness. Those works are sometimes sacred tragedies, nay sometimes romances composed on purpose to inspire a taste for virtue, and horror for vice. It were to be wished that they employed persons to write those works, whose talents were equal to their good intentions: but the greatest part of those which I have read, are commendable only for their design. Yet I except one romance, which is *Pamela*, wherein, notwithstanding great tediousness,

ousness, and a fund of low education, which may possibly disgust most part of the readers, I have found very good things.

I will remark on this occasion, that there is not a city in the world, where more benefactions are made to hospitals, and where these charities are worse dispensed. *The number of hospitals, says an English author, encreases daily, without diminishing the number of our poor.* The best foundations, and yet the most neglected, are in England. The general cry of the nation has not yet prevailed on the parliament to redress those abuses. Six pence per month are stopped out of every sailor's pay, towards the support of Greenwich hospital, which is an establishment for English sailors of the same nature with the *Invalids* for our soldiers: yet I am informed that many of those who live in it, have no sort of right to admittance. Avarice makes some masters provide for old servants, whom vanity was frequently the sole motive for keeping, at the expence of the public: in order to save themselves the allowance of pensions, they send them to those establishments, which belong only to those honest subjects, who have spent their youth and health in the service of their country. Is it possible, that the greatest abuses are found among those, who pass for the wisest people in Europe; and that where they talk so loud of zeal for the public good, those whose duty it is to watch the general interest, constantly sacrifice it to their private advantage!

In England, the state loses a vast number of subjects for want of having at London so necessary and well-regulated an establishment as our hospital for foundlings. You may easily remember, that this was confessed to us one day at Paris by that illustrious and virtuous Englishman \*, who is now president of the Royal Society ; and who to a warm zeal for the public good joining the most extensive lights in every branch of knowledge, deserves to be placed at the head of the managers of all the charities in this city. In England every parish is oblig'd to take care of the children born therein ; and there are sufficient funds settled for their maintenance and education : and yet, to the great shame of the managers, the most part of those unhappy little ones die within the first or second year. Fifty foundlings hardly furnish one man to the state. This is a matter of such moment, that it equally concerns humanity and policy. How is it possible that the English should be guilty of so much negligence ; since humanity is said to be their first virtue, and that they are such masters of political calculations, that they know the precise value of the life of every person in the nation !

To return to the Society for reformation of manners, their laudable design puts me in mind of a pamphlet, which I have read, and possibly you will not be sorry to see. I am entirely of the opinion of the ingenious author \*,

\* Martin Folkes, esq;

author \*, and sincerely wish that in all countries there were no other taxes laid but on the vices of mankind.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

*An infallible scheme to pay the public debt of this nation (Ireland) in six months.*

“ **T**He great distress of this unhappy country, is too visible to all, except those who have power to redress it.

“ We may observe thro’ the whole nation, one universal complaint of the decay of trade, the oppression of landlords, and the deficiency of money; and yet I cannot find among all the schemes proposed to lessen these evils, any one in particular, which seems likely to succeed.

“ But

\* Dean Swift. He is one of the English authors, who has best succeeded in pleasantry: but even in this kind of writing he is not always happy. Who can relish his *modest proposal for preventing the children of the poor people in Ireland, from being a burden to their parents or country; and for making them beneficial to the public*? The method he proposes, is to fatten them, and then sell them at a public market, for the food of wealthy folks, nice palates, &c. On this head he enters into a wretched detail, equally ridiculous and disgusting. ’Tis easy to perceive, that the whole is a violent satire against the English government, for oppressing Ireland: but we often miss our aim, for want of address. The author intended to make people laugh, and he surfeits. A satire that would bear reading over a second or third time with pleasure, would certainly have a better effect, than a writing, the insipidity of which makes it drop out of the reader’s hands.

“ But what is still an addition to this melancholy prospect of affairs, is the unbounded luxury and extravagance, both in apparel and entertainments, which persons of all ranks and degrees run into at present; tho’ in general we labour under such hardships and poverty.

“ We are affected in a quite different manner from all the nations upon earth: for, with others, wealth is the mother of luxury, but with us poverty has the very same effect; with others, scarcity is the parent of industry, but with us it is the nurse of idleness and vice.

“ We labour to imitate our neighbouring kingdoms in nothing but their extravagance, without having the same plentiful aids of commerce, or applying ourselves to the study of fair-dealing to maintain it. So that, in short, by our own ill management, we are brought to so low an ebb of wealth and credit, that our condition seems incapable of any relief.

“ But, as I have the interest of this misguided people very much at heart, I do not intend this essay as a detection of their present grievances, but as a remedy against them. And for that purpose, I have laboured to find out such a scheme as will discharge our public debt, with all possible ease and pleasure to the subject, and in so short a time, that we may neither complain of being oppressed by long-continu’d  
“ taxes,

“ taxes, (as some unreasonable people often  
“ presume to do,) nor quite despair of being  
“ once more in a thriving condition.

“ Let us consider what those vices are,  
“ which at present prevail most among us;  
“ and I believe, upon enquiry, they will be  
“ found Perjury, Fornication, Drunkenness,  
“ Swearing, Slander, Infidelity, Fraud, Blas-  
“ phemy, and many others: would it not  
“ then be worthy of our consideration, whe-  
“ ther a moderate tax upon every particular  
“ vice, instead of laying an additional duty  
“ upon wine, hops, and other commodities,  
“ would not supply us with a sufficient sum  
“ in a very short time? Such a tax must of  
“ necessity yield a vast revenue, and prove  
“ the most infallible, and indeed the only  
“ scheme for our prosperity, if it shall be  
“ thought proper to be continued.

“ But, before I proceed to particulars, it  
“ may not be amiss to premise, that this tax  
“ is not designed for any one county or pro-  
“ vince in this kingdom, but to extend itself  
“ universally over the whole nation: because  
“ different vices may flourish in different  
“ counties, as different plants in their diffe-  
“ rent soils; as perjury in one, theft in ano-  
“ ther, dissimulation and flattery in another,  
“ rapine in another, and so of the rest: howe-  
“ ver, I take theft to be our peculiar staple vice.

“ And lest any disputes may hereafter a-  
“ rise, about the nature of perjury, the inten-  
“ tion of the act in this particular, or what  
“ persons

“ persons are to be subject to this tax ; I must  
“ here also premise, that every lye confirm’d  
“ by an oath, is undoubtedly perjury, whe-  
“ ther before a magistrate, or behind a coun-  
“ ter. And therefore we do not doubt, but  
“ the trading part of our people will be  
“ great benefactors to the public in this par-  
“ ticular article, as well as in many others.

“ These two things being premis’d, let  
“ us suppose that in this large country 5000  
“ persons are guilty of this infirmity each  
“ day : which computation must be allow’d  
“ very moderate, if we recollect, that this  
“ number is not above a four hundredth  
“ part of the inhabitants of this kingdom,  
“ who are generally computed to amount to  
“ two millions. And if we further consider,  
“ what strong inducements our natives have  
“ to practice it, from its being often so ex-  
“ ceedingly beneficial ; if we consider the  
“ great use made of it in all sorts of traffick ;  
“ the great demands for it in law-suits ; the  
“ great advantage of it in elections, and the  
“ undeniable profit of it in all prosecutions,  
“ we shall think the number of 5000 still  
“ more reasonable.

“ Let us then suppose every one of this  
“ number to be perjur’d, only once every  
“ day, (which is a very favourable supposi-  
“ tion) and subject only to a tax of six-pence  
“ for each offence : for which sum, perhaps,  
“ he may procure either the death of an e-  
“ nemy, an estate for his friend, or a for-  
“ tune

“ tune for himself (all which are esteemed  
“ very desirable): the tax will be too incon-  
“ siderable to make any one murmur, and  
“ yet will yield the sum of 125 l. per day,  
“ towards discharging our national debt.

“ Besides, this tax, tho’ very low, may in  
“ reality be very profitable to mankind: for  
“ attornies, sollicitors, usurers, butchers, and  
“ other honest traders, will scarce think it  
“ answerable to the expence of time, to for-  
“ swear themselves for any profit from one  
“ penny to six pence, inclusive, (as now  
“ customary,) but will at least, for every  
“ transgression, expect to gain sufficient to  
“ defray the tax.

“ However, I wou’d have all sworn con-  
“ stables, and all collectors of this and many  
“ other taxes, entirely exempted from any  
“ penalty, as priviledg’d persons: because,  
“ by that means they will be enabled to be  
“ very serviceable in their several stations.

“ Fornication, as the world is at present,  
“ wou’d furnish the public with a large sum,  
“ even at a very moderate tax: for it is now  
“ made an essential part of the polite gentle-  
“ man’s character, and he that has prevail’d  
“ on the greatest number, proportionably rises  
“ in reputation.

“ Let us then compute, that in the se-  
“ veral parts of this nation, 5000 per day  
“ were liable to be taxed for this general vice,  
“ only at two shillings: the sum arising from  
“ this to the public good, will amount to

“ 500 l.

“ 500 l. per day, and in six months to almost one third of our national debt.

“ I know it may be here objected, that I have computed upon too small a number, and that I might justly account rather upon twenty or thirty thousand per day, in the several counties of this kingdom: but, tho’ I own this objection to be very strong, if we were to consider the opportunities of wakes, patron-days, hay-making seasons, may-days, religious pilgrimages to holy wells, balls public and private, and many other commodious scenes for that kind of entertainment; yet I would rather chuse to err on the right side, in too small, than too great a computation.

“ I know the popish clergy will make strong remonstrances against this tax, and plead, that it is design’d to oppress them; that all nations of the earth allow them a toleration in this particular point, as they are frail mortals, and sworn to celibacy; and what is still worse, that such a tax would be the most effectual means to drain them of their whole revenues: but as I would not have such pious persons justly complain of the least rigour, I shall readily agree to their being exempted.

“ Drunkenness I would only tax at fixpence, because it might be prejudicial to his majesty’s revenue to discourage it, and consequently subject the proposer to penalties.

“ Let

“ Let us then compute, that only twenty  
 “ thousand persons, (which is but one hun-  
 “ dredth part of the people in this king-  
 “ dom) were daily liable to be tax’d; the  
 “ amount would be 500 l. per day. And  
 “ how extreamly moderate this computa-  
 “ tion is, may appear to any one who con-  
 “ siders, that besides the usual opportunities  
 “ of taverns and private houses, there are elec-  
 “ tions, fairs, mayors feasts, university treats,  
 “ corporation dinners, christmas regales, wed-  
 “ dings and christ’nings, both in town and  
 “ country, and many other irresistible in-  
 “ ducements to this manly vice, which would,  
 “ perhaps, if nicely calculated, daily furnish us  
 “ with two thirds more than our computed  
 “ number, and by that means greatly conduce  
 “ to the public good.

“ But, however, I would by all means ex-  
 “ empt all country justices of the peace,  
 “ whether squires or parsons: because it would  
 “ be unseemly to see such honourable and  
 “ reverend personages insulted by meaner of-  
 “ ficers, as often as they might be discovered  
 “ in such a condition.

“ Swearing would be a most universal bene-  
 “ fit in this case: because at present, it serves  
 “ to season the discourse of all ranks and de-  
 “ grees of men. It is the principal ingredient  
 “ and decoration of all modern jokes, gibes,  
 “ quarrels, love-speeches, disputes, threats  
 “ and promises, and consequently capable of  
 “ affording an incredible revenue.

“ How-

“ However, let us suppose forty thousand per-  
 “ sons per day, liable to the tax of six-pence  
 “ only, for each offence of this kind ; which,  
 “ considering the great number of markets,  
 “ coffee-houses, shambles, barracks and ga-  
 “ ming-houses, in this kingdom, is a very in-  
 “ considerable number : yet even this article  
 “ will furnish us with 1000 l. per day, which  
 “ would amount to near two thirds of the pub-  
 “ lick debt.

“ Our laws have amerced each offence in  
 “ this way at one shilling, ordering one half  
 “ to the informer, and the other to the poor ;  
 “ which in my humble opinion, was very ill  
 “ concerted : for if the legislature did really  
 “ intend that this law should be punctually en-  
 “ forc’d, they ought to have divided the whole  
 “ mulct between the informer and the justice,  
 “ without any regard to the poor ; and then,  
 “ they might be assured, it would be vigo-  
 “ rously executed.

“ I am already apprehensive, that all mili-  
 “ tary persons will expect an exemption from  
 “ taxes on this account : because they may  
 “ plead precedent for many generations, may  
 “ alledge the power of custom, the decency and  
 “ comeliness of it, when properly mingled with  
 “ other discourse, or that the censorious world  
 “ would perhaps suspect, they knew nothing  
 “ of God at all, if they did not sometimes men-  
 “ tion his name ; and many other reasons of  
 “ equal weight : but tho’ these remonstrances  
 “ are very just, yet as this is the only means  
 “ by

“ by which our standing army can possibly  
 “ conduce to the national good, it will be  
 “ hard to exempt them.

“ However, as the military power would  
 “ infallibly be liable to this tax in all its branches, by which means they might be utterly impoverish'd; I believe it may not be improper to allow all foot-soldiers and field-officers, all young ensigns, spruce cornets, naval captains, cabin-boys and quarter-masters, forty or fifty oaths a day entirely free from any tax or penalty.

“ As for slander, supposing only twenty thousand per day, taxed at six pence for every offence, this article would daily afford the public (at the lowest reasonable computation) 500 l.

“ And as this is a favourite talent, we might have ventur'd to tax it much higher; but I would not seem to discourage so charitable a disposition, especially where it may promote the interest of my country.

“ As to the ladies, I have been always too great an admirer of theirs, to desire any restriction should be laid on their pleasure, either private or public; and therefore I would have them tax'd only half as much as the men for every little error of this kind because slander, in men, is a talent unnatural and acquired, and generally practic'd to ingratiate themselves with the opposite sex; whereas this genteel failing in females is innate, and impossible to be restrain'd; which

“ is a case that demands our utmost compassion.  
“

“ I think all drawing-rooms, assemblies,  
“ and all places of public resort for ladies,  
“ ought to be exempt from any penalty : because it is so material a part of the discourse  
“ and amusement of those places, that to tax  
“ them for each offence, would be in effect,  
“ to enjoin them perpetual silence ; which, if  
“ it were possible, would be too great a misfortune, both to themselves, and the world,  
“ to be exacted from them.

“ Infidelity and blasphemy would furnish  
“ us with a considerable sum ; and as they are  
“ not originally of our own growth, but annually imported from neighbouring kingdoms, they ought to be subject to some  
“ duty, which in few years would probably  
“ be a vast addition to the public revenue.  
“ Yet as this traffick is principally carried  
“ on by young lawyers, and travelling squires,  
“ any attempt to tax it would certainly meet  
“ with too vigorous an opposition. But on  
“ condition it might pass into a law, I would  
“ gladly exempt both lawyers of all ages,  
“ subaltern and field-officers, young heirs,  
“ dancing-masters, pick-pockets, and players.

“ Let us now only consider the several sums  
“ arising from the tax on our vices, as we  
“ have before computed them, and the justice and infallibility of this scheme must  
“ appear demonstrably.

The

The public debt of this nation is about 300,000 l.

And the tax

For perjury 125 l. per day.

Fornication 500

Drunkennes 500

Swearing 1000

Slander 500

---

Total per day 2625

“ Which in 182 days, or half a year, will  
 “ amount to 477,750 l. which is considerably more than our national debt.

“ But lest by the universal poverty of our  
 “ people, which is much to be fear’d, or by  
 “ their growing more virtuous, which never  
 “ can be reasonably apprehended, this daily  
 “ income should fall short of what we have  
 “ computed; I must humbly beg leave to  
 “ offer some other improvements of this  
 “ scheme, which will undoubtedly answer all  
 “ deficiencies.

“ And for this purpose, what if a severe  
 “ tax was laid on all manner of persons who  
 “ presum’d to marry till they were full forty  
 “ years old. If any should prove fool-hardy  
 “ enough to transgress a law so calculated for  
 “ the happiness of men, each offence would  
 “ be of signal benefit to the public: and if  
 “ providentially it should prove an effectual  
 “ restraint, there must of necessity be fewer

Q 2

“ children

“ children in each family, and of consequence  
 “ the number of beggars and wretches in this  
 “ kingdom, must proportionably decrease.

“ And what wou'd still be more material,  
 “ perhaps in one age, if this beneficial act  
 “ should be continued, the greatest part of  
 “ this country would require to be new peo-  
 “ pled from England ; a circumstance greatly  
 “ to be wish'd : because such an accident  
 “ wou'd probably cure that nation of its in-  
 “ veterate antipathy to the inhabitants of this,  
 “ at least for some generations.

“ As for the scheme to tax batchelors,  
 “ which has lately been propos'd to the house  
 “ by one of its honourable members, I must  
 “ beg leave to think it highly improper : be-  
 “ cause batchelors of all ranks and degrees,  
 “ are real benefactors to the public, by not  
 “ furnishing it either with beggars, or oppres-  
 “ sors of beggars, one of which must infallibly  
 “ be the consequence of marriage in this  
 “ country.

“ I would also earnestly request, that all  
 “ young clergymen, who, with more passion  
 “ than prudence, shall dare to marry before  
 “ they are beneficed, may be liable to a most  
 “ severe tax, equal to a prohibition : because  
 “ such offenders must inevitably multiply beg-  
 “ gars, live in contempt, and die in poverty.

“ These and many other expedients,  
 “ might easily be found upon any emergency  
 “ to furnish considerable sums for the nation-  
 “ al debt.

“ But

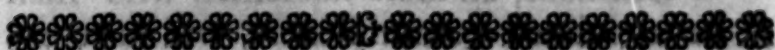
“ But as there will remain about 177,750  
“ l. over and above our public debt, I will  
“ allow one hundred thousand pounds of it  
“ for fallaries, to such persons as shall be ap-  
“ pointed collectors; and I hope this will be  
“ a reasonable provision, tho’ generally above  
“ one half of every tax is expended in paying  
“ proper officers to collect it. The overplus  
“ may be deposited in the treasury for any  
“ other pious use.

“ And if this scheme shou’d be so fortunate  
“ as to succeed, as I have no reason to doubt,  
“ from the present disposition of the house  
“ of commons, all those noblemen who shall  
“ be appointed commissioners, will have ex-  
“ cellent opportunities of promoting their ne-  
“ phews, cousins, footmen, fosterers, valets,  
“ and other valuable dependents to good in-  
“ comes, and places of trust and credit. But  
“ I wou’d by all means have none but Eng-  
“ lishmen nominated to be tax-gatherers: be-  
“ cause we may rationally suppose, that they  
“ will be entirely free from prejudice, in fa-  
“ vour of the natives of this kingdom.

“ Thus wou’d a moderate tax upon our  
“ vices apparently contribute to save this na-  
“ tion from utter ruin. Many persons who  
“ have not the least excuse for their irregula-  
“ rities at present (except the commendable  
“ public-spirited contempt for religion)  
“ might then plead in their own defence, that  
“ their immoralities had preserv’d their coun-  
“ try. And by this means we might be fur-

“ nish’d with a multitude of patriots, who  
 “ probably wou’d never prove so in any other  
 “ respect.

“ But I must humbly beg leave to dissent  
 “ from that religious gentleman, the admired  
 “ author of the fable of the bees; tho’, per-  
 “ haps, such a particularity of opinion may  
 “ injure my character with several of my  
 “ lay-brethren of most professions: and I  
 “ must publicly declare, that there can be  
 “ no other method, half so good as mine,  
 “ to make private vices public benefits.



## LETTER XXXI.

To the President BOUHIER;

*On tragedies in prose and blank verse, shewing  
 their incompatibility with the genius of the  
 French tongue: with a criticism on English  
 dramatic poetry.*

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

YOU very justly maintain, that tho’ the  
 fetters of rhyme are troublesome to us,  
 yet they hinder not a happy genius from soar-  
 ing to the most sublime beauties of poetry:  
 an example of which is, in my opinion, to be  
 found in the equally elegant and faithful trans-  
 lation,

lation, which you have given us of the poem of PETRONIUS *on the civil war*.

The dispute on prose tragedies had like to have succeeded to that on ancient and modern authors. That first schism had scarcely been appeased, when M. DE LA MOTTE plunged our Parnassus into new troubles, by preaching the reformation of rhyme. Innovators in all sorts of subjects, easily seduce people by constantly pretending to retrench abuses: and yet their innovations most commonly bring on greater than those which they would abolish. In vain has one of our most celebrated poets, equally capable and worthy of defending the common cause; in vain, I say, has M. DE VOLTAIRE demonstrated both by his reasonings, the falsity and dangerous consequences of M. DE LA MOTTE's opinion, and by tragedies such as *Brutus*, the loss we should sustain by banishing rhyme from the stage, according to the system of his antagonist: M. DE LA MOTTE's sectators have after his death attempted to re-establish a doctrine, which even in his life time was universally condemned.

Your zeal, sir, for the glory of our muses has made you espouse their quarrel in your turn: and you have so solidly refuted the reasons of those, who would fain introduce prose tragedies among us; that nothing farther could be said on that subject, if the defenders of M. DE LA MOTTE's system had not armed themselves with a new argument. They object the

example of the English, who have long since banished rhyme from their stage: they triumph in having for them the unanimous suffrages of so judicious and learned a nation. And indeed the English, for talents, good sense and philosophical knowledge, occupy so distinguished a rank in the literary world at this day, that their authority is of great weight on subjects of all kinds. However it allows us the liberty of examining; authority is but a favourable prejudice, and reason alone has the right of deciding.

If the English stage, since it expelled rhyme, had produced such master-pieces, as ours had room to be jealous of; we ought to be sorry for carrying a yoke, which hindered us from rising as high as our neighbours: I think I can assert without prejudice, that this is not our case; for which I appeal to the judgment of all polite nations. Even had we been compelled to acknowledge the English as masters of the stage, I should doubt if their example ought to make us renounce rhyme; because we have not the same advantages with them to do without it.

I sincerely own, sir, that their language, tho' harsher than ours, seems to me better adapted to poetry. Verse owes its principal beauties to the strength and boldness of expressions, and the English have a right to claim the one and the other as particular characters of their language. They use several expressions in prose, on which we would scarcely venture in verse. They have a greater number of verbs than  
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we: and after the manner of the Greeks and Latins they employ compound adjectives to express in one word, what we cannot express in our language without having recourse to periphrases. For example, they render *Achille aux pieds legers, l'Aurore aux doigts de rose, l'hydre à plusieurs têtes, le crime au front d'airain*; by light-footed Achilles, the rosy-finger'd morn, the many-headed hydra, the brazen-fronted crime. I could give you a hundred others, either of this, or of a different kind. The English say, *all-seeing, all-knowing, &c.* as well as *all-mighty*.\* Thus their language, bolder than ours, strongly renders by one adjective, what requires three or four words to express it more feebly in ours.

The English, in imitation of the learned languages, allows the poets more inversions of phrases and transpositions of words, than the French: without censuring the severity of our tongue, it may be said that this chastity, which makes it so clear, is as injurious to poetry, as the boldness of the English is advantageous to it. The French seems to be the language of reason, the English that of enthusiasm. The good sense peculiar to our neighbours is not at all perceptible in the genius of their tongue: and it is matter of wonder, that we are the people, who speak the most chaste and reasonable tongue in Europe.

When the English poets find the expressions of their tongue too weak or too common,

\* The word *tout-puissant* is used in French, but *tout-voyant, tout-connoissant* are not.

they take the liberty to borrow others, either from the dead languages, or the polite languages in present use. They are even allowed to coin new words. When CORNEILLE said:

“Ton bras est *invaincu*, mais non pas invincible.”

he was censured by the academy, and the word was not received. So happy a verse would have been relished in English, and the hazarded word would have enriched the tongue. As we cannot take those great liberties, we have not a separate language for poetry, as the English and Italians.

It is no wonder that the English poets, who allow themselves and are allowed all sorts of liberties, have had better success than ours, in translating into verse the two epic master-pieces of antiquity. DRYDEN'S English Virgil is read with pleasure. POPE'S Homer comes nearer still to the beauties of the original. We cannot well hope ever to see a good translation of the Iliad in French verse. The privileges of our poetry are too limited.

The different measures, which the English admit in their verses of ten syllables, which are almost the only sort they use, give them greater variety, and their poets more facility to express their thoughts in them. With those advantages and many others which they enjoy, it is no way surprising that they do without rhyme in tragedy: but we, who have not the same privileges, would be in the wrong to follow

follow their example. Those authors who would persuade us to renounce rhyme, because the English have shaken off its yoke, reason much like those others, who proposed to introduce dactyls and spondees into our verse, because the Greeks and Latins have used them in theirs.

Every tongue has a different genius, which should be well known, before deciding what it ought to admit or reject in poetry. What suits with one, does not always suit with the other. The French has too many consonants and harsh words to bear being measured as the Latin. On the other hand, the rules of our grammar are too severe, the constructions of our tongue too chaste, the licences of our poetry too narrow, to be able to do without rhyme, as the English poetry. However let us examine a little what the English tragedy has gained by shaking it off. The reason that is given for expelling rhyme from our dramatic poetry, is that we may by that means be enabled to follow nature closer, and raise the tragic sublime to a higher pitch: let us see if the English have reaped these advantages by so doing.

I shall say nothing of their greatest tragical writer: SHAKESPEARE's genius, enemy to all constraint, has not less disengaged itself from the rules of decency and probability too, than from the yoke of rhyme. He is the first English author, who dared to throw it off; at one time he speaks in prose, at another in verse,

verse, and sometimes even in rhyme: he says things as they offer, and every where equally indulges his laziness and genius. Hence it is, that such great beauties and such great defects are found in his works.

The dramatic writers who have taken him for their model, have copied his defects, without coming near his sublime: they have allowed themselves all his negligences, without having the same beauties to set them off. It was laziness, that made SHAKESPEARE write several tragedies in prose: it was for want of talent, that some authors have done the like. In regard to tragedies wrote entirely in prose, DRYDEN informs us, that the public were quite tired of them in his time; and he maintains the impossibility of succeeding therein, without enlivening them with some comic scenes.

Such, sir, has been the fate of prosaic tragedies on the English stage; and I leave you to judge if we have reason to envy it: had they been received on ours, they must have infallibly met with the same. The public would soon be disgusted with the dull pieces that would be brought on it. As a proof of this assertion, I refer all people of taste to the tragedy of *Oedipus* in prose. I cannot comprehend how M. DE LA MOTTE, who had a talent and a philosophical turn of mind, has so little improved the one, and made so bad use of the other.

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Were we to banish rhyme from tragedy, the stage would become a prey to the most indifferent writers, who dishonour it too much already by a number of dull comedies. Those who have the wretched knack of composing bad romances, would not fail setting up for authors of tragedy: they would most readily enter into a career that must appear easy to them; and men of true genius would not use their utmost endeavours to support their credit. We grow negligent, when difficulties do not warn us to be on our guard. The mind resembles virtue in this particular: it never employs its whole strength so effectually, nor shines forth with such splendor, as when it lights on obstacles.

I now proceed to their tragedies in verse, which differ from ours in nothing but the suppression of rhyme. One should be apt to think, that the English poets, freed from this yoke, ought thereby the better to imitate the true language of the passions; that their dialogue ought to be more natural and better connected than that of the French poets; and in a word, that their tragedies ought to be more perfect than ours: and yet to me it appears that the contrary has happened. The English authors, the better to shun the language of prose, have recourse to the boldness of figures. They every-where affect the epic strain, which in tragedy is as contrary at least to nature, as rhyme itself. A prince rack'd by the most violent passion, interrupts himself  
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in the middle of a thought, to make a most ample and frothy description of a storm. At the end of an act, whatever jealousy or fury he is possessed with, he must close it with a flowery simile. This fault is become so much in fashion with the English, that even the wise and judicious ADDISON'S *Cato*, that is to say, their most regular tragedy, is not exempt from it. In a word, on their stage as an author constantly runs after wit in comedy, so in tragedy the poet is too epic: and their dramatic works in general are full of ill-placed beauties. Their dialogue, far from being more natural than ours, is for the most part but a string of epigrams: 'tis the poet that answers, not the person whom he introduces on the stage.

If M. DE LA MOTTE found fault with RACINE for having said, speaking of the monster that devoured HIPPOLITUS:

“Le flot qui l'apporta recule épouvanté.”

if the florid account, which THERAMENE gives of the death of that hero, has seemed to him to be out of place on the stage; what would he have thought of the English tragedies, in which those epic beauties are so common; and where they are generally the most expected and most applauded?

I would be more cautious in exposing this defect of the English poets, did it not proceed from a cause which does them honour. The faults which the public sees with the greatest indulgence, are those of a bold genius; and such

such is that of the English: but a judicious reader, at the same time that he does them justice, and admires the fecundity of their imagination, cannot avoid condemning its abuse. Wherever he finds beautiful verses, he praises the talent; but if they happen to be out of the character of tragedy, he blames the use made of them.

The English poets, in conformity with the general character of their nation, cannot bear to be captivated by any yoke. They receive no rules for the stage, but such as leave them at full liberty. But yet their Pegasus would seldom run astray, if they held tighter reins to him. Like their hunters, he stands less in need of spurs to give him spirit, than of a curb to check his impetuosity. The English poets affect to support an error, which is favourable to their laziness: they look on all rules to be arbitrary; and yet there are some which ought to be inviolable. It is not because the Greeks and Romans have observed this or that rule, that we submit to it; nor because we are servile imitators, as the English call us; but because experience has taught us its utility; because we are sure that those rules are taken from nature, and that they are nothing more than the most certain and speedy means of finding her out. Their famous SHAKESPEARE is a glaring example of the danger one runs of straying from her. This poet, one of the greatest genius's perhaps that ever existed, for want of knowing the rules of the ancients, or

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at least for neglecting to follow them, has not produced a single play, that is not a monster in its kind: if there are admirable things in all his pieces, not one of them will bear reading throughout.

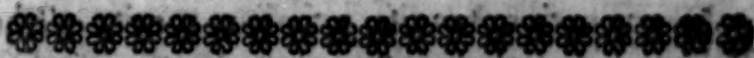
In order to deliver our tragedy from the servitude of rhyme, we are referred to the example of the English; but we are not told at what price they have purchased their ransom from that slavery. It would not be allowed us, to supply the want of rhyme with all the riches of epic poetry: and what passes with them for beauty, would among us be deemed a blemish. And pray what would be the consequence? That tragedy would soon sink into the familiar, that is, the low style: for in tragedy the low and familiar are quite the same. Those who would endeavour to avoid this style, so contrary to the character of tragedy, which should always be noble; would be compelled, like the English, to have recourse to the boldness of figures: and this would throw them farther off from nature. In short, I look on the majesty of the buskin to be incompatible with prose: and in our language, blank verse would approach too near common discourse.

There, sir, are several scraps of reasoning on this subject, which I have thrown together in my usual way without connection or method: for I have not pretended to enter into a regular dispute with the partisans of tragedies in prose or blank verse: the only end I proposed

sed to myself was to furnish you with new arms to make head against them, in case you take a fancy to enter the lists afresh. With my utmost endeavours, I could not use them to the same advantage as you can. In literary engagements, as well as in those where men expose their lives, it is not the force of arms, but the art of employing them that secures the victory.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



## LETTER XXXII.

To the Count DE C \* \* \* ;

*Containing a discourse of taste.*

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD,

**I**T seems to me that taste and the elegant arts are as much behind hand in England, as philosophy and the abstruse sciences have been improved there. The English in several respects are not yet arrived at the point where we were two centuries ago. It cannot be denied that they have really distinguished themselves in poetry. But if their muse has taken the boldest flights with regard to genius, she

has not improved much in respect to taste. That delicacy of thought, without which nothing beautiful is done of any kind, is wanting in most of their authors: WALLER, ADDISON, THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY, POPE, and some few others excepted, there is little to be praised in their writers besides a justness of reasoning or strength of imagination. They have several works impressed with the stamp of genius, but very few that bear the character of the graces. With a little more prudence and taste, MILTON would have made a masterpiece of his *Paradise Lost*.

Every nation has its peculiar merit. The Italians pique themselves on sense, the English on genius: the French may pride themselves on taste. There is not a polite language, into which our good works have not been translated, and have not served for models: our neighbours do not acknowledge all the obligations they have to us. The French tongue is in a manner become the language of Europe, and seems destined to the glory of succeeding the Latin. 'Tis no wonder that the several people, that were under subjection to the Romans, spoke their tongue: but why is the French at present so common in all the courts of Europe? Why do they speak it as familiarly at that of London, as the English or German; unless because we are patterns to our neighbours in all things relating to *agrément* and the graces? This unanimous consent of the enlightened nations

tions around us, is a testimony above all suspicion.

You, my lord, whose steady and penetrating mind equally extends to the sciences and elegant arts, you who know the English and their productions of all sorts, be pleased to inform me, why they have so little success in every thing that depends on taste; and why the graces have so little familiarity with them in whatever they do. Are exactness and the geometrical compass in reality so contrary to the graces? Does that constraint, which the rule puts them under, lead them astray from taste? You, who enjoy this valuable gift in its full extent, tell me what is this taste, which men of great merit, and even whole nations have sought in vain. The Romans, who were rivals to the Greeks in literature, were not capable of being their disciples in arts. If the sciences alone can give taste, where ought it to be more common than in this country? No people has cultivated them with greater success than the English: and yet, both the models of the ancients, and the examples of the moderns, have been equally useless to them in this point.

If I mistake not, it is easier to paint taste, under sensible and particular images, than to give a general and metaphysical definition of it. It might be communicated, if it could be defined. But it is of the number of those things, which are little known but by their negative qualities, and the essential ones of

which have hitherto escaped the researches of human understanding, Thus the great masters of this art have very well marked out to us the defects that are contrary to it; but they have not disclosed those beauties which are its source. They have rather shewn us the ways that turn from it, than the paths that lead to it: I say paths, because all the roads that lead to truth are narrow. There is no arriving at the beautiful part of works of sense and wit, which is the true part of them, as well as at virtue which is the true part of morality, but by difficult and unfrequented roads. If there are some talents, which excel with little or no pains; if some men are so happily formed, as to find no difficulty in any thing but being vicious; these examples do honour to our nature, but there is no consequence to be drawn from them in our favour. The Pythagoreans made good certain and finite, and evil uncertain and infinite: the same thing may be said of taste, a thousand roads turn from it, and only one leads to it. Even those who have had the happiness to find it, have not been able to teach it to others. This choice depends perhaps on a certain delicacy of sentiments, which rules cannot give.

○ PLATO himself, of whom we have two dialogues on the beautiful, rather teaches what this beautiful is not, than what it is.

○ Perhaps taste is nothing else in general but the most simple and natural order of things, and on particular subjects but the most noble  
and

and proper manner of expression. If I cast my eye on a picture of CORREGIO, if I read a tragedy of RACINE; the one and the other equally confirm me in this idea. And I dare affirm, that it agrees with the principles of the ingenious author of the *Essai sur le beau*, a work as proper for forming our morals as our taste, and in which effectually reign truth, order, the honest and the decent; which, as he himself says, constitute the essential beauty, which we naturally seek in works of genius.

According to him, in the physical as in the moral world, order is always the foundation of beauty. Why does a building please us? It is because the similitude, the equality, the correspondence of its parts, reduces the whole to a sort of unity which satisfies our reason.

In works of genius order is absolutely necessary, because there is an order existing between different truths. Yet in the sense in which I use the word, it does not signify that dry disagreeable method, which constantly stalks along by first and second points, articles and sections. This practice of the schools is diametrically opposite to taste. The order that I mean, consists in a natural succession of ideas, the concatenation of which is always perceptible, tho' it be not expressly declared; in the care of placing every truth in its right point of view, *so that the first illustrate the succeeding ones, and that these in their turn reflect a sort of new lustre on the first by their natural sequel.*

I mean in fine those happy transitions, which constantly denote a writer of the first class; and the art of which is unknown to middling authors; those transitions, I say, which, while they link the several parts of a discourse together, enrich it by beauties that seem to flow from the nature of the subject, and yet are quite unexpected. A judicious reader, capable of deducing consequences from principles, is not much obliged to you for leading him by ways that he knew before: the only means to please him in so doing, is to strew them with flowers.

This order, as I explain it, is really what is seldomest found in the works of the English. The mind seems every where to partake of the nature of the body. The inhabitants of this island have somewhat hard in their countenances, and stiff in their motions. Few of them join the graces to the beauty of features, or the noble air to the advantage of a good shape. Their conversations, their writings, nay their very virtues are blended with some portion of the hardness of their character.

Again it is uncommon among the English to seek any thing but strength in their expressions: the greatest part of them will not even allow the distinction of noble and low expressions. One might almost doubt if they are affected by the one, since their organs are not fine enough to be hurt by the others.

On the contrary, such of the French works as have taste joined to invention, are equally remarkable for that simple and natural order of ideas, and the happy choice of expressions, in which they are dressed. Perswaded that an idea cannot make a beautiful appearance, without being nobly expressed, we no more suffer a writer to be negligent in the choice of his words, than in the ordering of his thoughts.

Mr. DRYDEN, one of the most witty English poets, has very justly remarked, that as our dress ought to be modest, our expressions, which are the dress of our thoughts, ought to be decent: but he himself in this very place errs against the rule he lays down for others. He compares words to that part of our cloathing, which decency does not allow to name. The English writers seem to be ignorant, that the graces are never found out of the company of decency.

From the sensation of the palate we have borrowed the word taste, to express the judgment we form of things, which are not subject to certain and evidently demonstrable rules. This metaphor is the more just, because taste appears personal and quite indetermined, as well as in our palate and other senses. Our minds are differently affected by the same things, when they are of such a nature as not to be demonstrable.

What pleases at Paris is disliked at London. Old people and young have different ways of thinking. Thus the country, the age, the diversity of characters or inclinations are so

many sources of the variety of tastes. Whence it seems to follow that beauty, of what kind soever, has nothing fixed and absolute. But if there are tastes of mode and caprice, some acquired by habit, others produced by particular affections; possibly there is some essential one, founded on nature and truth: and I should be tempted to believe, that all the disputes which arise on this subject, are occasioned purely for want of making this distinction.

And indeed what is really beautiful, independent of all mutual agreement and by its own excellence, seems to give pleasure to reason. If in arts and works of genius, all men are not touched with that which I call real beauty, it is because some of them have not received from nature such sense as may be affected by them, and others have not exercised it sufficiently to form a sound judgment thereof. But all those who are properly disposed to perceive it, know it wherever it appears. In the moral, as well as in the physical world, none see but those that have eyes.

If taste was merely arbitrary, why should France be the leader of Europe in every thing relating to it? The preference which is granted at this day to the masterpieces of the Greeks and Romans over the productions of the Goths, which are sometimes ingenious, but always fantastic, seems to be founded in nature, and may possibly have a physical cause, which has not as yet been thoroughly discovered. In all parts

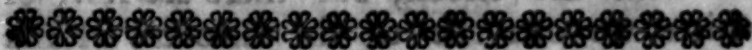
parts of knowledge we are pretty well acquainted with the effects, but there are few, of which we can rise to the discovery of the causes.

Metaphysics, which can alone open us the ways that lead to the first principles of every thing, are a science which seems common, because it is in every body's mouth. The wit thinks he knows it, and the philosopher that he teaches it. But it is an immense ocean, in which all branches of human knowledge, like so many rivers, are swallowed up. If a few men of superior genius and exquisite sense have made some discoveries therein, how many others have been lost in those unknown seas! No sure magnetical compass has been found to steer by. BACON, DES CARTES, LOCKE have happily sounded some spaces of it: but in how many others have all their efforts been fruitless! Nay perhaps there are some, of which the mind of man ought never to presume to fathom the depth.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

L E T.



## LETTER XXXIII.

To Abbé OLIVET.

*Of the small progress eloquence has made in England, notwithstanding the great opportunities the English have to cultivate it; and the personality and want of decency in the debates of the two houses.*

LONDON, &amp;c.

SIR,

THE English have such an esteem for our language, that they are pleas'd to read even the works of CICERO in French; and your translations of them, are in great request here. That of his *Tusculan Questions*, which you have just published, in concert with president BOUHIER, has been approv'd of in England by all who are competent judges of the beauties of the original, and of the exactness, with which both of you have translated them. The notes with which that illustrious magistrate has enrich'd the text, have had the approbation of the learned at Oxford and Cambridge. They have done justice to his profound learning and fine judgment. This, sir, is the judgment the learned part of England have pass'd on this last performance.

formance. Without making you a compliment, I can assure you, that you are both as well known, and as much esteem'd here, as in France.

As to what regards the progress eloquence has made in this country, it by no means equals that of the other productions of the mind. The English are the greatest geometers in Europe; they have had great philosophers, great poets, and great critics; they have had a NEWTON, a MILTON, and an ADDISON, but they have not yet had a celebrated orator amongst them. You ought to be the more surpris'd at this, because, of all the polite nations at this time, England affords the most opportunities of cultivating the lofty and sublime eloquence. What produced the masterpieces of this kind, which you have so happily translated into our language, what form'd the DEMOSTHENES and the CICEROS, was the advantage the Greek and Roman orators had, of speaking on peace and war, on the preservation or ruin of the republic, and of governing (as one may say) a whole nation by speech. And thus, according to THUCIDIDES, PERICLES who had the gift of restraining the Athenians, when they were too daring, and of raising their courage, when too timid, was in effect the king of a titular republic. His perswasive eloquence on the bench, made whatever he desired pass into laws, and he reign'd as much by the force of his eloquence, as PISISTRATUS by that of his arms.

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The English have the same advantages and the same opportunities; the liberty they enjoy, ought to give their minds that elevation, which produces sublime eloquence. A peer of the kingdom in the house of lords, and the representatives of a borough in that of the commons, have the interests of the state, and safety of their country in their hands. Like the orators of Rome and Athens, they speak before legislators who are assembled only to procure the ease and happiness of the people. The parliament of England represents the nation itself, and possesses the principal part of the legislative authority. What is more capable of raising the genius than these great interests, than the publick welfare, and the preservation of a whole nation! Besides these motives, which can only affect souls of the first rank, in England, as heretofore at Rome; riches, reputation, and even authority itself, are also the reward of eloquence. Whoever is distinguish'd for his eloquence in the house of commons, may become the first person in it; that is to say, may enjoy the most important, and perhaps the most honourable employ in the nation; since the speaker of that assembly is, as I may say, the man of the people. Nevertheless, the speeches made in parliament, no more resemble in energy and elevation of style, those with which the Roman orators made the rostrum resound; than the parliament house resembles in majesty and grandeur, the place where the Roman senate held it's assemblies.

The

The English accustom themselves to speak *extempore*, on all subjects that are treated on in parliament; the matter may be prepared, but their discourses are very rarely studied: for which reason there appears more logick in the series of their reasonings, then rhetorick in their manner of urging them. *I have always been surpris'd*, says one of the wisest English writers, *that our young nobility study the art of speaking so little; 'tis of all others the most honorable and most useful, in such a government as ours is; and our orators are unpardonable for neglecting so much, the precepts the ancients have left us in that respect.* There are, indeed, in both houses, some who have the gift of speech, and who are heard with pleasure; such as the Earl of C \* \* \* and my lord C \* \* \* in the house of lords, who pass here for the most eloquent men of their age; in the house of commons, mr. P \* \* \* speaks with great boldness and vivacity; mr. W \* \* \*'s tone is more even and more affected. But in general, I can assure you, when one comes to read the greater part of the speeches that are made in parliament, one does not find in them that noble and strong eloquence, which strikes and transports us in the orations of a *Demosthenes* and a *Cicero*. Perhaps it may be, as they say, those who make the most noise in parliament, have not the general interest of the nation so much in view, as their own. 'Tis certain sordid passions cannot inspire noble sentiments. A zeal for the public good makes men eloquent,

quent, the spirit of party makes only silly declaimers. Nothing less than an ardent love for our country, and an intire attachment to the welfare of the people, can make a true orator. These generous sentiments can only affect great minds, and men of the most sublime genius, are alone capable of arriving at them.

A mean soul does not endeavour to move out of it's sphere, it discovers nothing beyond the narrow limits in which it is circumscrib'd; it may eagerly pursue its own private interest, or that of some others whose inclinations are agreeable to it, but is not susceptible of that laudable ambition, which so enlarges the faculties of the soul, that it comprehends the greatest objects; the advantage of a whole society, the happiness of a million of people, are then the only ones that seem worthy to move it. Vice makes a man center in himself, virtue raises him above humanity.

The illustrious archbishop of Cambray, was of this superior class of men; nothing but the love of the public welfare, could inspire him with courage to make truth speak, in the midst even of a court. TELEMACHUS is the cause of nations pleaded at the tribunal of kings. That eloquent prelate throughout the whole, shews those whom providence has placed on a throne, that their true interests are inseparable from those of their subjects; that a king may acquire fame by his conquests, but can only be great by the love of his people:

people: and that perfect heroism consists in the exercise of those virtues alone, which conduce most to the happiness of mankind. What do those owe to their birth, which has given them a right to watch over the safety of their fellow-subjects! Is there a more flattering glory, a more sensible satisfaction to a rational being, than to contribute to the happiness of his equals? To be the benefactor of mankind, is to approach as near as possible to the deity; \* yet nevertheless in this country, as well as all others, how rarely are those to be found, who have nothing in view but the public welfare!

QUINTILIAN remarks of HORTENSIUS, that in reading his pleadings, we don't find them worthy the reputation of their author, whose principal merit was his action; if the same thing happens here, when they publish those speeches which have been most renown'd in parliament, it cannot proceed from the same cause, because the English intirely neglect this part of the orator, which DEMOSTHENES said was the first, the second, and the third. Some of them, if you will believe them, would even banish the use of all oratory, out of their assemblies, as unworthy of the place, and the weightiness of the matters there debated. They pretend that the oratorial art is only fit for those, who suffer themselves to be govern'd by their passions; and not for those, who follow

\* Homines ad deos nullâ re propius accedunt, quam salutem hominibus dando. Cicer.

low the dictates of reason. But such are mankind in general, that they are more easily led by the one, than the other. 'Tis not to be presum'd, that an assembly of five hundred persons should, upon every occasion, embrace the truth: the greatest part of them may mistake it, if it is not cloath'd with all the charms of perswasion. Why should they neglect the use of a weapon, that so long preserv'd the Roman republic? Let us not require greater perfection from men, than human nature admits of; we must for their advantage, conform ourselves to their weaknesses; and move their passions, when we cannot convince their understandings.

'Tis undeniable, that violent and mercenary orators, in the Grecian commonwealths, often employed their talents to make injustice triumph, and oppress virtue. And is there any thing that wicked and corrupt men do not pervert the use of? But even this abuse of eloquence proves its power, and consequently the advantage which might be derived from it for the service of our country, when we have virtue enough to prefer that, to all other considerations.

The end of true eloquence, is to set virtue in its clearest light, to instruct men in their duty, to inspire us with those principles, and implant those noble and generous sentiments in our hearts, that make us renounce all personal advantages which are contrary to that of

fellow-subjects ; and lastly, convince us, that there can be no true happiness, but what is founded on moral virtues.

But an orator hardly ever convinces us, unless he himself seems convinced. When an author thinks what he writes, without perceiving it, he draws his own picture in his writings ; and 'tis that makes them appear natural : we perceive he delivers his sentiments, by the warmth of his expression. He who is insensible of what he says, reasons without being animated : the one would only prove, the other would convince. He who is convinced, would convince others ; he would make proselytes : the other would only shew his wit. How many ancient philosophers have only preached virtue ; *EPICURETUS* makes me love it.

If those who have the advantage of being the defenders of liberty, in the English parliament followed the examples of the orators of Rome and Greece, they would not only inspire the members, who are intrusted with the guardianship of the laws ; with their sentiments ; but the people also, who have chosen them to be their protectors. Whatever is said in these assemblies is soon made public. Here, as formerly at \* Rome, there are able

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\* Cicero speaks of this art of writing in short-hand, in epistle the 32, of Lib. 13, to Atticus. Plutarch in the life of Cato says, the invention of it was attributed to Cicero himself.

The Persians have also a sort of cypher, which they make use of instead of common writing.

transcribers, who, by means of a short hand, can bring away a discourse, tho' pronounced ever so fast. They are actually publishing a collection of all those that have been spoke in both houses of parliament, since the great æra of the restoration of CHARLES II. \*

I was sometime since in the house of lords ; they were then debating a question, in which, perhaps, the liberty of the nation is most nearly concerned ; they were debating, whether they should continue the army on the footing of sixteen thousand men, or reduce it to that of twelve thousand. I was at first struck with the awe that august assembly ought to inspire ; but during the heat of the debate, several words slipp'd from those that spoke, which must necessarily diminish it. I found in every thing that was said there, more hatred to the minister, than regard for the public welfare. Invectives and jests supplied the place of reason, in the dispute. The enemies to the ministry maintained, that the powers which could give umbrage to England, and even France itself, more to be feared than all others, had nothing in view at that time, but justice and peace. My lord CARTERET made an encomium on the minister, which the king, who every day gives us cause to praise the mildness of his government, has placed at the head of his counsels. A partisan of the court admitted this encomium was just,

\* This collection was published in 1741.

just, but said, that minister, tho' ever so virtuous, was not immortal. A third, as well known for his wit as for opposition to mr. WALPOLE, replied to him, and convinced them that the French minister was really not immortal. *But, said he, his successor will not be so neither, nor he who will succeed him, and England is in a miserable condition, if she must maintain numerous armies, because the French ministers are not immortal.* This repartee caused laughter, but was not capable of moving, which is the end of eloquence, and ought to have been the object of the speaker.

Thus according to their different characters, some rail violently against every thing the minister does, and others jest, sometimes indecently, on the most serious and important subjects. One is used to cut jokes, and another to take them up. They compliment those of their party, and inveigh against those whose opinions they oppose. They affront each other; and ask pardon; and whilst they are thus govern'd by their private passions, or personal animosities, they loose sight of the main point in dispute, and sacrifice the interest of the public, to that of their party.

*How much sooner and better, said mr. WALPOLE one day to the house of commons, would affairs be debated, if we would in our debates, avoid all personal invectives and offensive jests. By these means a lye passes for truth, and ignorance which has recourse to them, serves instead of capacity. If our votes are obtained by*

*drollery and banter, there is no occasion for wisdom and honesty, to get a majority, laughter and railery will be sufficient; which any man of an ordinary capacity may practise as successfully as another.*

Here is a very different speech made in the house of lords, by one of the greatest authority there. *My lords, the two young noblemen who open'd the debate, spoke with such a dignity, so much energy in their reasoning, and such propriety of expression, that I began to think myself in a senate of Rome, of Athens, or of Lacedæmon; for which reason, I ought to thank the noble duke, who spoke last, for having brought me back into a true \* English house of lords. Is not this attacking the honour of the assembly itself, to dare to testify such a signal contempt for it, and impute to the whole, what might be the error of only a particular member? Is it surprising that contemptible pamphleteers speak so disrespectfully of the members of parliament, when they themselves so ill observe that regard, which they owe to each other, and first set the scandalous example of want of respect? Thus when one of them accuses the greater number, of selling themselves to the minister, and says; that as they receive wages of him, he wished they also would wear his livery, that they might be known \*;*

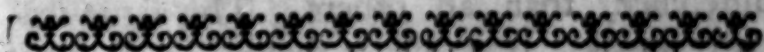
\* Speech of my lord Bathurst. Journal of the house of lords, vol. 7. page 554.

*known* \*; he furnishes matter for the most abusive libels.

I have only mentioned these abuses, because of the unavoidable influence they have on eloquence, the taste for which they have intirely vitiated. Perhaps the remedy might be worse than the disease itself. Perhaps they only prove, that the English are men, and like other men.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



## LETTER XXXIV.

To Monsieur DE BUFFONS;

*The reason why there are so few good houses in London; the magnificence of the English nobility in the country, and how both sexes spend their time there.*

LONDON, &c,

SIR,

**L**ONDON being a very large, very rich and very dull city, and where the sea-coal smoke in a manner poisons the air one breaths in it; 'tis not surprising that people of easy fortunes, of what rank soever they are, take so little pleasure there, and stay no longer than bu-

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finess obliges them. A duke lives in a smaller house here, than many tradesmen do at Paris. There are few houses remarkable either for the beauty of the buildings, or richness of the furniture. I could count above fifty houses, in the suburb of St. Germain only, which are taken no notice of, that are superior to the duke of BEDFORD's house, which the English boast so much of.

'Tis not that they are afraid of expence in this respect, the natural cause, which I have already mention'd, contributes more to this difference, than all others. This same sea-coal smoak, that obliges them, be it what weather it will to go out every morning, to breath the fresh air, hinders many from building palaces in a city, that is disagreeable to them. Besides, 'tis equally pernicious to paintings, gilding, and in a word, to rich furniture, as to the health of the inhabitants.

For this reason, the nobility do not regard London as the place of their residence, and foreigners, who see them mix'd pel-mel with the merchants of this great city, form a very bad idea of them. One would imagine they regarded the houses they live in here, only as a sort of inns to lodge in, during the sitting of parliament; 'tis only in the country, that they display all their magnificence: they have all of them spacious houses there, numerous families, and parks full of deer and stags. They keep an open table there for the gentle-

lemen of the county, and live in such a manner as shews their wealth and grandure. As our nobility, whose estates have been impair'd by the luxury of Paris, are sometimes oblig'd to spend six months in the country, to patch them up again; the English do just the contrary; they stay in London when they have a mind to save money, and only live frugally there, to be able to live with more splendour on their estates in the country.

They divide their leisure hours, when in the country, between hunting, which is their favourite diversion, and the table; where they sit longer than we do in France. The rest of their leisure, some spend in applying themselves to agriculture, and the pleasures of domestic life; others in bodily exercises, most of them very violent. That which they seem to like best, is one, at which they play with all their footmen; and that, say they, *because the English have a juster idea of true greatness than other nations; and are not afraid of exposing theirs by conversing familiarly with their inferiors.* Though we assent to this elogy, yet we may doubt whether it be the true reason for such a custom; because, I think I discover a more sensible, and truer one: and that is, they are uneasy when alone. The English visit one another in the country, but seldom live together there. Weariness is a tyrant that disquiets the life of the greatest part of mankind; and tho' his sway

extends equally over the country as well as the city, yet noblemen are more affected by it, than their inferiors.

Happiness is not join'd to the possession of riches. The peasant is often happier than his lord; the daily labour of the first, makes him enjoy that tranquillity of mind, which is the most valuable of all worldly things, and which the wealth of the whole universe can't purchase. In the midst of riches, we are tormented with the immoderate desire of heaping them up, or with the fear of losing them. Few men are capable of enjoying them. Nature has joined a sort of a poison to them, that is almost always fatal to the repose of those who possess them.

And thus, amidst the greatest plenty, there is the most necessity to spend. Let us not disguise the truth, however mortifying to us; 'tis not out of friendship that men desire each others company, 'tis only out of necessity. 'Tis this makes the servant, in retirement, a companion for his master. A man is the most dangerous company in the world for himself; and that is the reason so many men are sick of themselves. All cannot sensibly enjoy the rich presents nature makes us; have a taste for agriculture, love gardening, take a pleasure in seeing a rose blow; all are not capable of receiving instruction from the lesson, which the laborious bee sets us, when she ranges so many flowers, to collect the juices, of which she composes her honey; and yet these are the only

ly pleasures, that neither tire or disgust in the country, and which a man must love, to be really pleased with residence in the country. But how few people have that tranquillity of mind, which produces this sensibility! The wise, the happy man, is he who can equally enjoy solitude amidst the hurry of courts; or be in company when shut up alone in his closet. What happens to others? The wearisomeness that drove them from town, follows them into the country; and to make use of a familiar, but very expressive phrase; they do every thing, they even play with their footmen *to kill time*. How silly we are! Time is our greatest treasure, and yet we are perplex'd to find ways to throw it away; we complain that our life is short, and every day seems too long. We shorten it ourselves by not enjoying the present, which is ours; and running incessantly after the future, which does not belong to us.

The English ladies also, who have been always thought as proud as the French, amuse themselves in the country with their women; and are often reduc'd to the necessity of dancing with them, for want of knowing how to spend their leisure time. They cannot get the better of their weariness, but in a crowd and bustle; and from hence come the dances of twelve or eighteen persons at a time.

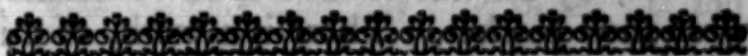
The same uneasiness that in the country forces an English peer to play with his groom; makes them, in other countries, afraid  
to

to leave the city. For how many people really think, *there is no life for persons of distinction out of Paris?* Man born to labour, ought to think *this sickness of himself*, a sort of tribute, which he, who will live idly, is forc'd to pay to nature. To exempt themselves from this, they have recourse in different countries, to quite contrary means. At London, they pass their time in publick-houses; at Paris, they do nothing but visit each other daily, without having any business together, and very often even nothing to say. The greatest part of those who come into a house, would do just as well, both with regard to themselves and those they visit; if they only left their names in writing at the door. What so many people are in search after, by this continual motion; at Constantino-ple, where they are more sedentary, they find by the help of opium and smoaking tobacco. The art of true enjoyment is above the reach of most men; they only know how to banish sorrow. To avoid this cruel wearisomness which persecutes them, one ruins himself in building, and another at play; some plunge themselves into misfortunes, and others run into the most ridiculous follies. This disorder of the mind turns that into madness, which is only taste in wise people. A man spends all his time in making a large collection of books which he does not read; a woman is unhappy, if she has not a dozen lap-dogs always about her. So many people amuse themselves with parrots, because they have nothing in  
them,

them, to amuse themselves with. If I mistake not, this uneasiness is the source, of almost all the follies and extravagances of mankind.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



# LETTER XXXV.

TO Mr. FRERET;

*Mr. SMITH's touch-stone, to distinguish Tories from Whigs.*

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

MANY people suffer themselves to be so prejudiced, in favour of the reputation the English have for wisdom, that they are blind to every thing which is not agreeable to it; and others who are only struck with some defects, which are peculiar to them, perhaps do not enough admire their zeal for the maintenance of their laws and liberty: there is a medium between these two extremes, which a wise man should keep, as you constantly observe in every thing you say to me. 'Tis certain their different sentiments with regard to the government, occasion many inconveniences in civil society. One finds, as it were, two nations in the same. If they have not

not our follies, they have others, and you are too well acquainted with mankind to be surprised at it: follies are the appurtenances of human nature.

You remember, sir, to have read in the *Spectator*, that there was a time in England, when the women shewed what party they were of, by the side of the face on which they wore their patches. There is a work, of this odd fantastical humour, just published, which if I mistake not, deserves to be known, at least for its singularity. This is the title of it;

#### THE TOUCH-STONE,

*Or a plain and easy method to distinguish an honest and true Englishman, from a false one; that is to say, a friend to liberty and his country, from a slave to fortune and the court; a work very necessary for all gentlemen, tradesmen, artificers, labourers, and others, who have a right to vote at elections. By NATHANIEL SMITH, of the city of Leicester.*

*Timeo Danaos & Dona ferentes.*  
London, by BERNARD LINTOT, 1737.

I begin with the preface, the whole of which I will send you, that you may be the better able to judge of the character of the author, and his manner of thinking.

“ The

“ The flourishing condition and glory of  
 “ England diminish in proportion, as the de-  
 “ pravity of our manners increases ; corrup-  
 “ tion is now become so general, that nobody  
 “ gets into \* parliament, without buying the  
 “ votes of the city or county he represents. E-  
 “ very body who aspires to be a member of  
 “ the house of commons, is obliged to keep an  
 “ open table during the time of his election :  
 “ and those who have a right to elect, do not  
 “ perceive that on these occasions, people of  
 “ different parties make use of all artifices to  
 “ deceive them. The ravenous wolf there  
 “ puts on the innocent lambskin, he who has  
 “ secretly sold himself to the court, swears by  
 “ the holy gospel to constantly oppose the mi-  
 “ nister ; and the honest artificer and simple  
 “ farmer believe him on his word ; the great-  
 “ est part of them, either for want of expe-  
 “ rience or capacity, being incapable of dis-  
 “ covering the cheat under his disguise. Thus  
 “ a man thinks he chooses one who is zealous  
 “ for his country’s interest, when he gives his  
 “ vote to an ambitious wretch, who is ready  
 “ to sacrifice it to his own.

“ The misfortunes which happen daily by  
 “ by the artifices the whigs \* make use of,  
 “ to

\* The author means the house of commons, as appears by what follows.

\* These names of Whig and Tory, have not always signified the parties for, and against the court. In my lord B——’s letters, a work, which for the elegance of the style, and solidity of the Reasonings, surpasses every thing the English have produced.

“ to deceive us, have determined me to pub-  
 “ lish the observations I have made, on so  
 “ important a subject. They are so many in-  
 “ fallible rules to distinguish a true Tory,  
 “ from one who is only so in appearance.  
 “ At the same time these rules are very in-  
 “ telligible to every body; 'tis not necessary  
 “ either to have studied, or frequented the  
 “ coffee-houses in London, to apply them.  
 “ He that has eyes to see, let him see; and  
 “ he that has ears to hear, let him hear. I  
 “ teach to distinguish a Whig from a Tory,  
 “ by his manner of dressing, acting, speak-  
 “ ing, drinking, eating, &c. In a word, a  
 “ man need only have eyes and ears, to ne-  
 “ ver mistake.

The first chapter is intitled, *Of the constitu-  
 tion, physiognomy, tone of voice, &c. of the  
 Tories.* I only propose to give you an account  
 of the author's ideas, without adopting them  
 myself. His desire to create mirth, has often  
 made him, in his remarks, sacrifice exactness  
 to caprice. The drollery and continual ex-  
 aggeration throughout the whole work, shew  
 you very plainly, that 'tis a satire equally ex-  
 travagant and humourous.

He

duced of that kind; one sees they call the same party, Tory or  
 Whig, alternately, according as they have adopted such or such  
 principles. Mr. SMITH gives the name of Tory, to whoever  
 opposes the court, let his principles be what they will. What  
 is more extraordinary is, that Whig was for many years the di-  
 stinguishing title, to signify those who were of the popular  
 party.

He first lays it down as an undeniable fact, that the Tories in general look better, and are of a stronger constitution than the Whigs; *either because they feed on more substantial food, and which agrees better with them, or because they don't impair their constitutions, so much as the Whigs, by conversing with lewd women.* These are the author's own words: "'Tis easy, says he, to distinguish one who is descended from a race of ancestors, who have liv'd on beef and pudding; from one whose father and grandfather have spoiled their stomachs by living on nothing but nice French dishes, the one has abundance of flesh, and a certain plumpness that shew the strength of his constitution and understanding; the other on the contrary has always a pale meagre aspect, that ought to make us fear his understanding partakes of the imbecility of his body. Achilles was fed with lion's marrow, to make him strong and courageous; the gravy of beef has the same effect on the natives of this country. 'Twas the nourishment of those brave Englishmen, who gained so many, and such glorious victories over the French. All other food only tends to weaken the body, and dispose the mind to that effeminacy, which a politic minister knows how to make advantage of. King CHARLES II. had very good reasons for introducing French cookery among us.

Mr.

Mr. SMITH next pretends, that the Tories have a more serious, masculine and thoughtful air, than the other English; but then he has the honesty to grant also, that most of them are of a more melancholic disposition. As to the Whigs, he assures you, the greatest part of them, especially at court, have an effeminate look; and that in general they have a giddy-headed, volatile, thoughtless air; and in a word, the French air. You see the author gives us also a rub or two by the by.

As to the tone of voice, he says the Whigs have a soft and insinuating one, and the Tories a lively and masculine one. If you'll believe him, all is effeminate in the one, and masculine in the other. He proceeds so far as even to say, that he can distinguish by the sound of the voice only, a Tory of an ancient family; and who has not debased himself by marriage; one, for example, who is descended from a Tory in CROMWEL's time; for he is of opinion that the Tories are as ancient as the English constitution, and that all enemies to ministers, in what age soever, were Tories. And, lastly, he imagines those are best, who are of Welch extraction.

The second chapter treats of their manner of dressing; but as the Whigs imitate the Tories in this, when they have a mind to please the people, the author acknowledges they ought not to depend too much upon that. In St. James's-Park, in a morning, says Mr. SMITH, you would take our young noblemen  
for

for rational Englishmen, and true Tories; but at night, you find them at the opera, powder'd, curl'd, and loaded with lace, and in short, contemptible Whigs, as they really are. The rest of this chapter must appear very insipid to you who have not lived in England; but with mr. SMITH a long or bob-wig, a coat of such or such a fashion, are matters of consequence; all things are subjects for conjecture.

I pass over also the three following chapters, as containing only superficial remarks, or random guesses; and come to the fifth, the whole of which I will send you. 'Tis the most extraordinary and most important of the whole work; the title excites curiosity; which is this;

*Observations to be made at an election feast, to know whether the candidate is a true Tory, and whether he may be relied on.*

“ You must observe with what air your  
 “ landlord receives you; if at entering the  
 “ room he takes you honestly by the hand,  
 “ and squeezing it with all his might, gives  
 “ you a hearty shake, as our ancestors used to  
 “ do; bless your stars, and say to yourself;  
 “ this is one of us: but if on the contrary he  
 “ makes you a very humble low bow, be a-  
 “ fraid of this foreign politeness, and take care  
 “ of yourself; you are in an enemy's country.

“ You must next give attention to what  
 “ they set on the table; if soups, fricasses and  
 “ such other ridiculous inventions of French  
 “ cookery, make their appearance there; the  
 “ person who entertains you, is certainly a

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Whig,

“ Whig, tho’ he protests the contrary ever so  
“ solemnly. Those of that party dare not eat  
“ agreeably to their natural palate, but at their  
“ tables follow the dictates of some eminent  
“ glutton at Paris, and prefer a larded pullet,  
“ to our roast goose and apple sauce.

“ If there is no plumb-pudding at the can-  
“ didate’s table, or if there is, and he does not  
“ eat of it, ’tis another proof that he is a Whig.  
“ *Tell me the company, and I’ll tell you the man,*  
“ is a certain maxim; *and tell me what you*  
“ *eat, and I’ll tell you what you think,* is ano-  
“ ther as certain.

“ If there be roast, whether it be butchers-  
“ meat, tame or wild-fowl, if it does not  
“ swim in butter, you may depend upon it,  
“ he is not a Tory; a man of that party,  
“ would never be guilty of so essential a fault,  
“ for fear of disobliging the palate of some  
“ quacks in cookery, who find fault with eve-  
“ ry thing in ours, that is not agreeable to the  
“ French mode.

“ If he makes use of his fork, to put the  
“ bits of meat into his mouth, and does not  
“ take them up, sauce and all with his knife,  
“ as our forefathers always did; he is a man  
“ spoil’d by custom, and cannot be certainly  
“ relied on.

“ With regard to drink, that also furnishes  
“ us with as certain remarks. Strong liquors  
“ give courage, and therefore the Tories love  
“ them. You ought to be prejudic’d against  
“ every man who prefers Bourdeaux-wine to  
Port

" Port ; 'tis certain he has not the interest of  
 " his country at heart, because the first of  
 " those wines comes from a country, where  
 " the ballance of commerce is against us, and  
 " we import the other from a country, where  
 " on the contrary it is very much in our favour.  
 " If the candidate for member of parlia-  
 " ment, should go so far, as to choose to  
 " drink Burgundy rather than Bourdeaux-  
 " wine, he is a man that has entirely lost the true  
 " English taste ; and by that, gives the great-  
 " est reason to believe, he has also lost the  
 " English way of thinking: the one is the  
 " consequence of the other. If a true Tory  
 " had lived ten years in France, he would ne-  
 " ver have been able to bring himself to like  
 " the flavour of Burgundy, or the relish of a  
 " Partridge.

" Lastly, if the candidate likes Champagne  
 " better than the \* White-wines which we  
 " import from Spain and Portugal, or make  
 " in this island ; there is no need of farther  
 " examination, he is a disguis'd Whig : and  
 " let them say what they will in his favour,  
 " constantly refuse him your vote. They one  
 " day, contrary to my opinion, chose a man  
 " that I mistrusted, because I had seen him  
 " drink three glasses of Champagne ; and six  
 " months after he turned his coat, and went  
 " over to the court party. There's no trusting  
 " those, who love a liquor so improper for our  
 " nation.

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\* The author means those ordinary wines, which the Eng-  
lish call Mountain-wines.

“ nation. They have no more solidity, than  
 “ the froth of the liquor they are so fond of.

“ 'Tis also proper to inform the English, who  
 “ are honest and mean well to their country,  
 “ of a custom the Whigs have lately introduced  
 “ to their tables ; I mean the nobility of  
 “ that party, or very rich private gentlemen,  
 “ who are silly enough to imitate them ; and  
 “ in general, all those English, who have the  
 “ most depraved appetite. The scandalous  
 “ manner, in which the Whigs endeavour to  
 “ establish the customs and vices of foreign  
 “ nations amongst us, is very well known.  
 “ The greatest part of them, now a-days, drink  
 “ their wine with ice, and this purely out of  
 “ an air, as that is intirely a forreign taste.  
 “ And there are some of them who affect to  
 “ do this, even in the month of December,  
 “ because 'tis the custom of the hot-brained  
 “ French to do so. I shall surprise our honest  
 “ northern English, who know no county but  
 “ their own, and have seen no city but York,  
 “ much more, when I tell them, that they  
 “ eat ice at some tables in London, as they do  
 “ *Gooseberry fool* at theirs.

“ To what a height of corruption are we  
 “ arrived ! O times ! O manners ! And what  
 “ would our virtuous ancestors say to this foreign  
 “ luxury. This depravity is happily not  
 “ yet introduced amongst the wise Tories, and  
 “ those of that party, who are honest and sincere,  
 “ still warm their wine before they drink  
 “ it, as the true English have always done ;  
 “ which

“ which is a salutary custom for the stomach.  
 “ The Chinese also, a nation fam'd for their  
 “ wisdom, eat cold, and drink hot.

“ What most distinguishes the Tories from  
 “ the Whigs, is, that they drink much more  
 “ than the others; one may judge how a man  
 “ thinks of the government, by his manner of  
 “ drinking. A common Tory, drinks twice  
 “ as much as a Whig; a zealous Tory drinks  
 “ as much as a dozen of them together; and  
 “ there is not one of them, of the first class,  
 “ who is not able to drink, in large bumpers,  
 “ at an election feast, the healths of all those  
 “ of his party, and all the curses which they  
 “ then, according to custom, bestow on the  
 “ heads of the contrary party; and besides  
 “ these, confusion to the high church in ge-  
 “ neral, and damnation to all the lords spiritual  
 “ in particular.

“ The last reflection, I have to make on this  
 “ subject, is, that every man, who presses a-  
 “ nother to drink, and does not drink himself,  
 “ is an enemy who endeavours to surprise him;  
 “ and thus many of the Whigs do. The o-  
 “ pen hearted and honest Tory, has no re-  
 “ course to such ungenerous, mean tricks; he  
 “ is without deceit, without craft; and if ei-  
 “ ther the interest of his party, or common  
 “ civility requires him to make his guests  
 “ drunk, he himself first sets the example they  
 “ ought to follow.

And this I think, sir, is sufficient to shew you  
 what the intent of this work is. If the romantic

strain of the author did not caution all sensible readers to distrust his opinions; would it not be indeed very extraordinary, that a man, according as he is for or against the court, should be more or less addicted to excess in eating and drinking? And if it were so, what might be the reasons of this difference? Some pretend that the place of their education contributes something to it, and that they drink more at one university, than the other; but this reason would not appear satisfactory to me, supposing the thing were true. Those who espouse the one, or the other party, have been educated at the one, or the other university, without distinction. And since one can make only bare conjectures on this fact, already doubtful in its own nature; cannot one suppose, that the regret of the antiministerial party, to see all their projects miscarry; the despair to see those of their adversaries succeed; and in a word, the continual discontent in which they live, make all those things requisite for them, which alleviate uneasiness and chagrin? On the other hand, the partisans of the court apply themselves more to what is called studying mankind, and gallantry; they converse more with the sex, they have a greater taste for frequenting the play-house, the opera, and all those places where 'tis not necessary to drink for amusement.

However, I do not in the least pretend here, either to criticise on the one, or make an encomium on the others. I should be very cautious

tious of daring to determine any thing on this subject; CATO, the great CATO, that firm republican, that virtuous Roman, after the example of Socrates, the wisest man in Greece, often drank more than was consistent with temperance; and Lucullus, who carried luxury to its highest pitch, was the honestest man of all the ancients.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

LETTER XXXVI.

To the Count of C\*\*.

*Of architecture in England; and the bad taste of the English, and ridiculous taste of the French in their ornaments and furniture.*

LONDON, &c.

SIR,

YOU are acquainted with the *Vitruvius Britannicus*; and as you are not only a master of the rules of all the arts, but have that exquisite taste, which is much superior to the rules themselves, because 'tis the hidden principle of them; don't you think the author of that work has had all the remarkable buildings in England, design'd and engrav'd on purpose to shew us, that architecture is a science, which is not yet naturalised here? It is one of those that depend on taste, and therefore may be still a long time foreign in this island. 'Tis not that archi-

ture is void of known principles and certain rules, some of them, founded on nature; as this, for example; *That the strongest ought to support the weakest*; and others successively established and unanimously agreed to, as the result of the experience of our predecessors: but the most difficult and most extensive part of it, that of decoration, and the ornaments it is capable of receiving, taste alone must give; and taste gives nothing in this country.

Architecture is one of those things, which most particularly indicate the magnificence of a nation; and from magnificence, we easily conclude grandure. Though we could only judge of the Romans, by the ruins which are left us of their stately amphitheatres, would not they nevertheless be the object of our admiration? All that history relates of the Ægyptians, makes less impression on us, than those vast pyramids, which have subsisted in their country for so many ages. What an idea, will the front of the Louvre leave to posterity, of the power of that monarch who erected it, and of the degree of perfection, to which the arts were carried, in his reign!

Italy, is the country of Europe, that has produc'd the most masterpieces of modern architecture. The English have yet only the merit of having copied some of them. The \* architect, who built their famous church of St. Paul, at London, has only reduced the plan

\* Sir Christopher Wren.

plan of St. Peter's at Rome, to two thirds of it's size; the proportions excepted, which he has very ill observed: and a man, who understands but little of architecture, may easily perceive, that throughout the whole, wherever he deviates from his model, he has committed the greatest errors.

The greatest part of the country houses, for there are few at London, that deserve to be spoke of, are also in the Italian taste; but it has not been always justly applied. One of the first things an architect should consider, is the climate where he builds; what is proper for a country as hot, and where the air is as clear as that of Naples; is improper in a much colder climate, and where the sky is not so serene. The Italians, in their houses, ought to screen themselves from the excessive heat, the English, who do not see the sun so often as they would, ought to admit it, as much as possible. A pleasure-house for a garden at Rome, is not a model for a country-house, in the neighbourhood of London.

They pretend the English, who will pass for men of taste, do many things against the grain; they are forc'd in every thing to constrain their own taste and affect a foreign one. They pay very dear, say they, to hear musick that displeases them; their tables are covered with meats disagreeable to their palates; they wear cloaths that are troublesome to them, and live to houses where they are not at their ease. This is not the only country where we find  
men

men who are the dupes of this sort of madness, who sacrifice their ease to the fashions of a genteel air, and real pleasure to what is only the shadow of it. How must this folly make true philosophers laugh!

The celebrated INIGO JONES, has adorned London with some edifices of taste, and amongst the rest, with the magnificent Banqueting-house at Whitehall, one of the finest pieces of architecture in Europe. On the other hand my lord BURLINGTON, who has joined example to precept, by the fine house which he has built for himself at London, and some things which he has published concerning architecture; has endeavour'd to give his countrymen a taste for it. But these models have not made the English architects more expert; for whenever they attempt to do any thing more than barely to copy, they erect nothing but heavy masses of stone, like that of Blenheim-castle, the plan and front of which you will find in the *Vitruvius Britannicus*.

The English also, in the ornaments of their buildings, very often affect a taste that is perfectly childish. They have built for the queen in Richmond-park, a small structure to place her country library in; which they call Merlin's-cave. 'Tis only an octogon pavilion, with a Gothick arched roof; and has nothing in it answerable to the idea, it's name gives us of it. You find no other curiosity there, except that sorcerer and some other figures in wax, as large as the life. So far from finding  
any

any thing in this building that savours of enchantment and the magician's power, it is impossible to conceive any thing of a worse taste.

The English are not always happy in their inventions; but are unacquainted with the exactness of proportions, and elegance of forms in every thing: and therefore succeed no better in the taste of their furniture, than in that of the ornaments of their houses. We regard the Italians as our masters in the architecture and external ornaments of large buildings; but the French seem to understand the distribution and internal proportions, the best of any nation in Europe; and the bad taste of the English particularly shews itself in these.

However, the love of truth does not permit me to flatter my countrymen in their faults. I shall be bold enough to own and condemn the pernicious effects of our natural levity. We now a-days in every thing that depends upon design, as well as in the productions of the understanding, begin to deviate from that noble simplicity which the great masters of antiquity followed in all things; and ours have endeavour'd to imitate. 'Twas not for want of invention, that both the one and the others adopted this; and those who affect to deviate from it, prove their bad taste much more than the fruitfulness of theirs. Whatever they say, to hide their ignorance or want of capacity, 'tis much easier to follow our own humour, and tack scraps of verses together, than to contrive a fine scene, and

re-

represent nature truly in it. This seeming abundance is a real sterility. He that has both a fruitful genius and fine taste, thinks he ought to reject all superfluous beauty. But in this sort of riches as well as others, a man must be rich indeed, not to regret the loss of those, he has ill employed. A bungling designer invents ornaments of all forms, and crouds them on one another; a man of BOUCHARDON's genius, invents only noble ones, and distributes them with judgment. The Goths were as prodigal of them, as the Greeks avaricious; but the example of the last shews us, that the force of genius, and perfection of art, are to arrive at this happy simplicity.

I am certain, sir, you see with regret, that we already affect in several instances to deviate from the taste of LEWIS XIV's time; the golden age for learning and the elegant arts in France. Nothing is more monstrous, as HORACE observes, than to couple together beings of different natures; and yet 'tis what many of our artists at this time glory in doing. A cupid is the contrast of a dragon; and a shell, of a bat's wing; they no longer observe any order, any probability, in their productions. They heap cornishes, bases, columns, cascades, rushes and rocks, in a confused manner, one upon another; and in some corner of this chaos, they will place a cupid in a great fright, and have a festoon of flowers above the whole. And this is what they call designs of a new taste. Thus by going beyond

yond the due limits, we are returned to the Gothick barbarity. Perhaps there are things, where too much symmetry is a fault, but 'tis commonly a greater, to observe none; there should always be a symmetry in the whole mass, tho' not in all it's parts. 'Tis indispensably necessary in architecture. A building, of whatsoever sort, is a whole compos'd of parts, that ought to correspond with each other; and 'tis in the ornaments we should use variety. Statues placed facing each other in a niche, have a bad effect, if they do not appear very nearly of the same size; but they offend the eye as much, if their attitudes are exactly the same. Thus in a flower-garden; the borders, both in their middles, and at their ends which answer to each other, should have the same proportions; but to observe exactly the same regularity, in the disposition of every one of the flowers, which are planted there to vary the prospect, would be to affect a symmetry equally childish and insipid. But how far are we at present, with regard to ornaments, from this defect! We will have nothing that looks like symmetry. If they adorn the frontispiece of a house, with the arms of the person who built it; they place the escutcheon in a diagonal line, with the coronet on one side of it, so that it looks if it were going to fall down. They forsake the perpendicular and horizontal lines as much as possible; and place nothing now, either upright or level.

Our architects in time past were too wise to take those liberties, which the moderns think so ingenious. In this more adventurous age, they would have every thing make a shew, and turn things topsy-turvy in such a manner, that I am afraid this ill taste proves their heads are turn'd. Our sensible artists, often blush at things they are obliged to do; but the torrent bears them down, and they are forced to do like the rest, to get employment. They ask them for things of the new fashion; of those shapes, which bear no resemblance to any thing; and they let them have them.

This fashion is most visible in that part of our furniture, which is designed chiefly for ornaments; and indeed the taste which admits of every thing at this time, runs perhaps more ridiculous lengths than ever it did. What do those pendulum-clocks, so much in fashion, resemble; which have neither basis nor corbel, but seem to spring out of the wainscot, to which they are fasten'd? Those stags, dogs, huntsmen, or Chinese figures, which they dispose in so odd a manner about the dial-plate; are they it's natural ornaments? Those cartridges, whether at the top, the bottom, or on the sides, which have nothing to answer them; are they really of a good taste? A shape that is, as we may say, undetermined, and unlike all known shapes, is so far from being pleasing; that we can't conceive any thing elegant, which is not terminated, and does not resemble something. There is in all  
sorts

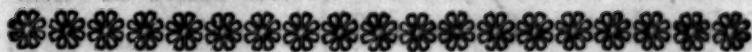
forts of things, a *Right*, without which there can be no beauty; and 'tis the sense of this *Right*, that constitutes taste.

What is there more ridiculous, than varnishing the brasses, which are placed for ornament in a chimney? What more absurd, than fastening pagods of China-ware to them? Thus by varying shapes too much, we run into extravagance; and by crouding too much riches into ornaments, fall into foppery. We hardly avoid one excess before we are guilty of a greater. Nothing is so difficult as to eradicate bad taste: 'tis a hydra with many heads, one of which you have no sooner cut off, but another springs up. There are some happy mortals, who by superior strength compass the destruction of it. Thus MOLIERE, in his time, by the beauty of his plays, forc'd the people to abandon the silly jests, playing with words and double-meanings to which they were accustomed. Thus the *Puget* of our time, may, by the productions of an invention as wise as fruitful, and an exquisite judgment, restore the true taste to design, by recalling us to beautiful nature; and make every thing, that ignorance and bad taste has lately produced, fall into contempt. That of this time, sir, is so deprav'd, that I do not think it can continue much longer; and the attention and encouragement which you give to arts, must necessarily hasten its fall.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

L E T.



## LETTER XXXVII.

To Abbé OLIVET.

*Of the chicanery of the English law, both in  
civil and criminal cases.*

LONDON, &amp;c.

SIR,

**I**N all civiliz'd countries, the defence of the distressed, has always fallen under the cognizance of eloquence; 'tis its duty to implore the protection of the laws, against the oppression of injustice; but how shall it lend its voice to the widow and the orphan here, when the most important interests of the state have so much difficulty to move it?

The art of oratory, in the different courts of justice in Westminster-hall, is confin'd much more frequently than in ours, to captious subtilities and chicanery: with us, indeed, this monster, equally enemy both to good sense and honesty, appears every day at the bar, in a square cap and long robe; with an impudence assumed from impunity: and although true eloquence makes its appearance at it but seldom, 'tis nevertheless not entirely a stranger there. It now and then raises its voice in our courts, and makes its power be felt. We have at this  
time

time *Le Normans, Cocbins, Aubris*, who still support its glory there; and do no less honour to our nation, than to the noble profession they exercise with so much renown.

Chicanry; which went into England with the Romans and their laws, must have found as happy a disposition in the minds of the English, as in those of the Normans themselves. Its power is as firmly establish'd in this country, as ever it was in its native one. England is doubtless it's greatest and most glorious conquest. From the time that chicanery establish'd its throne, in the different courts in Westminster hall; it has reign'd with a despotic sway, without interruption or rival. Its empire is perhaps more firmly established, and certainly more lik'd by the nation, than the present government seems to be. The king has not twenty thousand troops to make the laws obeyed, which is doubtless the intent of the standing army, heretofore unknown to the English. Chicantry has fifty thousand lawyers to support its power, and perpetuate its reign. They call them *the army of the law*; and some even make the number of them amount to an hundred thousand. The author of a small tract upon commerce, pretends there are more of them in England, than in all the rest of Europe; and that they are possessed of a fourth part of the lands of the nation. As younger brothers in England are reduc'd to live on their portions, they willingly embrace the profession of a barrister at law, because 'tis one of the most lucrative.

The barristers at Westminsterhall dispute more about the letter of the law, than the justice of their cause. They raise more difficulties about the meaning of the words, which ought to determine the judges, than they give attention to the examination of the facts, controverted by the parties. And as villains frequently get off, by the most frivolous and childish subtilties, the lawyers apply themselves daily to invent new ones; this is the continual study of the great number of inns of court at London, which, properly speaking, are only seminaries of chicanry. By their artifices, justice is overburthen'd with such a heap of laws, that 'tis become an oppression to those who have recourse to it; and who because they suffer by it, ought rather to be called Patients, than Clients, as an author of this nation has very justly observed.

Such dispositions in the laws, in the judges, and in the lawyers, are absolutely contrary to eloquence; and 'tis as impossible it should ever be established among the barristers at Westminster, as among the attornies of the Chatelet \* at Paris.

To confirm you in the idea I here give you, of the English law; I'll tell you an extraordinary fact which mr. POPE mentions in † his moral Epistles.

Some years since a villain of the first rank, amassed very considerable riches by the most iniquitous means. First, by forging a false conveyance

\* There are two *Chatelets* at Paris, the great and little. They are both prisons. In the great is held a court of judicature.

† See Book II. Epist. iii.

veyance of a very good estate to himself. The fact proved, he was condemn'd to have his nose slit, and ears cut off in the pillory. The other means he made use of to increase his wealth, and for which he was prosecuted at the same time, was this; he made a false will, by which he disinherited a brother, and gave the inheritance to himself. For this last villany the court of Chancery condemn'd him to perpetual imprisonment, where he enjoyed those ill gotten goods, 'till his death; and then disposed of them, as his own property, in favour of his own relations. In France, besides the corporal punishment, the goods this wretch had seiz'd on, without any other title than that of his villany, would have been restored to their true proprietors; but the law is quite different in England, and the counsellors at London will maintain in their pleadings, that the punishment impos'd for such crimes, becomes a lawful title of acquisition, with regard to the person who has committed them. 'Tis just as if this wretch had purchased these estates, at the price of the punishments he was condemn'd to suffer. Thus if any one chooses rather to acquire an estate of ten thousand pounds a year, than to preserve his nose or his ears; as we naturally suppose all mean souls, as those of villains are, would: justice teaches him the way to do it, and assures him the quiet possession of it. What shameful playing with justice, in so weighty a matter! And what abuse of law, in so wise a nation! Is not

this favouring vice, and giving the cunning of villany, sure means to triumph over the plain dealing of innocence?

The proceedings against criminals in England are neither more serious, nor better regulated: they are treated in such a manner here, that to say nothing more, would surprise all the rest of the world. But that you may yourself be able to judge of the subterfuges, by which chicanery can screen a criminal from the severity of justice; here is what I have found in the tryal of the famous CHRISTOPHER LAYER, so well known by the news-papers of that time; who was tryed for high treason, before the house of lords in 1722.

“ As to the second exception, (said the  
 “ counsel for the prisoner) that, in relation  
 “ to *Christopherus* [writ with an *e*, whereas  
 “ it should be *Christophorus* with an *o*] we  
 “ submit it to your lordship if that be not ex-  
 “ pressly within the defects mentioned in the  
 “ act of parliament miswriting, misspelling,  
 “ false and improper Latin; nay, whether it  
 “ is not subject to censure under each of these  
 “ four heads.

“ My lord, it was impossible to bring all  
 “ my authorities, upon this point, along with  
 “ me; but I have here in court several of the  
 “ best dictionaries and lexicons, which shew  
 “ the true word to be *Christophorus*: and I  
 “ believe the gentlemen of the other side can’t  
 “ produce one instance in any authentic book  
 “ either Greek or Latin, but it is always spelt  
 “ with an *o* and not with an *e*. It is *Christo-*  
 “ *phorus*

“ *phorus* from *πρεφους*, the *Preteritum medium*  
 “ of the Greek verb *φειρω*; and the rules of  
 “ etymology and formation of Greek verbals  
 “ evince that it must be so, and cannot be o-  
 “ therwise: and by all the Latin dictionaries,  
 “ the Latin word for *Christopher* is *Christophorus*.  
 “ My lord, I hope your lordship will par-  
 “ don me; here is the life of a man concern’d:  
 “ and as I would not willingly offer any thing  
 “ to your lordship that in the like cases hath  
 “ been over-ruled; so neither would I omit  
 “ any thing that may be material for the pri-  
 “ soner, whose defence the court has intrusted  
 “ us with: therefore I will go on to the other  
 “ objections that we think to be improper La-  
 “ tin; *compassavit*, *imaginatus fuit*, *et inten-*  
 “ *debat*. These are the words, I don’t know  
 “ whether this Latin will go down in West-  
 “ minster-hall, but I am satisfied it would not  
 “ in Westminster-school.

“ Here is the *et intendebat*, *et* a conjuncti-  
 “ on copulative between verbs in several tenses;  
 “ here is *compassavit* the preterperfect tense,  
 “ *imaginatus fuit* the preterperfect tense, and  
 “ *intendebat* the preterimperfect tense. Why  
 “ should not the last verb have been put into  
 “ the preterperfect tense, according to the rules  
 “ of classical Latin, as well as the two former?  
 “ Therefore, &c.

Can one seriously hear such discussions of in-  
 significant grammatical niceties, in an affair of

U 3

such

\* Notwithstanding the chicanry and address of his counsel,  
 this unhappy wretch was condemn’d to die for high treason. His  
 tryal was printed at London, in *Folio*, 1722; with that of Dr.  
 Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, who died at Paris, in 1731,

such importance, and where the life of a man is in question? what would a people the least civiliz'd, nay even the savages of America think, of such an extraordinary form of justice? After all, is it not as if the counsellor had said; the prisoner, whose defence is committed to me, may be a traitor to his country, but his prosecutors are guilty of blunders, contrary to the rules of the Latin grammar; for which reason, I demand that he be set at liberty, tho' his crime enormous as it is, go unpunish'd. Should we dare to give the name of law, to what would authorize such reasoning? Is *MOLIERE's* *Araminta*, who turns *MARTINA* out of doors, because the poor country girl did not speak good French, more ridiculous than the counsellor, who would screen a criminal, because his accusers speak bad Latin?

I know what reply may be made me, and that the counsellors in this, only act according to law; and I know that this also, strange as it appears, has nevertheless a very laudable object, which is; to give an innocent person more means to defend himself, and at all events to spare the lives of men as much as possible. But the intention of most laws is always good; 'tis the execution of them shews their disadvantage, or utility. Those only do honour to the legislators, which really contribute to the happiness and support of society. Laws are made to punish those who disturb its order;

order; the subtilty of lawyers encourages them.

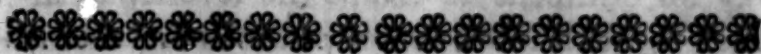
'Tis a maxim in all countries and of all ages, that the repose of society requires crimes should be punish'd; and is not the opening a way for criminals to escape the severity of justice, by such subterfuges, authorizing them? Let the laws require the strongest proof of crimes, let the counsellor make the most of every circumstance, that can extenuate them; and welcome; 'tis sufficient to have humanity enough, to receive favourably whatever tends to preserve the lives of our fellow-subjects, and save the miserable, except *reasons for exception*, drawn from the mistakes a magistrate may commit.

As to laws, they ought equally to prevent innocence being oppress'd, and crimes going unpunish'd. The prosecution of an Englishman in Latin, is also a remnant of the barbarity of the last age; which the parliament has at last taken cognizance of. In the latter years of the reign of GEORGE I, it was enacted; that public acts of all sorts, should for the future be writ in the English language. 'Tis surprising the English were so long before they thought of so easy a way to pare the nails of chicanry: but what reforms are still necessary to be made, to perfect their law! 'Tis as dangerous to permit barristers to elude the intention of laws, as it would be to leave the meaning of them to be interpreted by judges. The

last would make them arbitrary, the first make them uselefs.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



## L E T T E R    XXXVIII.

To Monsieur DE BUFFONS;

*Of the riches of the English farmers, and the difference between them and the French.*

STAMFORD, &c.

S I R,

**T** H I S in the country you perceive most, the difference there is between France and England; one might almost say, that luxury reigns as much in the country in England, as it does in the cities in France. The English farmer is rich, and enjoys all the conveniences of life in abundance: if he labours for the merchant, he partakes, as well as the rest of his countrymen, of the advantages of commerce. In several parts of England, a farmer's servant drinks his tea, before he goes to plow.

The wisdom of the English government, is to be justly praised for taking such particular care of the happiness of this class of men,  
which

which we ought to regard as the first, because 'tis they who subsist all the rest. A country where the farmer is in easy circumstances, must be a rich country. The cultivation of the land, and the welfare of those employed in it, should be the principal object of the legislative power. 'Tis unreasonable that he who sows, should reap only for others, and that he who labours, should not enjoy the fruits of his labour. Let the maxims, dictated by hard-heartedness to the miserable, which is but too often the concomitant of luxury and opulence, and adopted by bad policy, be what they will; lands are always better cultivated, in proportion as the farmers are richer: at least, certain it is, those who are ill fed, are not able to endure the fatigue of labour.

Our neighbours, in this respect, act upon quite different principles; humanity dictates them, and experience shews their wisdom. The care with which the country is cultivated with them, is the consequence of the plenty, in which the farmer lives; and if he is truly, commonly speaking, more robust here, than in France, 'tis perhaps because he is better fed. The fruits of his labour, are not only sufficient for his necessities, but also enable him to procure that sort of superfluity, which makes what we term, *the pleasure of life*; and which varies according to mens different conditions, all of which we may say, have their luxuries. In England, as well as in Holland, the villages are neater and better built, than in  
France;

France; every thing in them declares the riches of the inhabitants. One perceives by the houses of the English farmers, that they are in easy circumstances enough, to have a taste for neatness, and that they have leisure time enough to satisfy it. I have found them every where well cloathed. They never go out in the winter, without a riding-coat. Their wives and daughters not only dress, but adorn themselves. In the winter, they wear short cloth-cloaks, to defend themselves from the cold; and straw-hats, in the summer, to guard themselves from the heat of the sun. All the English women have fine complexions, even those in the country, are not without; and the ease they enjoy, permits them to take care of them. A young country girl, in other countries, is a meer peasant; here, by the neatness of her dress, and genteelness of her person, you would take her for a shepherdess in one of our romances. I know provinces in France, where there is no difference between the man and his wife, but the pettycoat; some of them also labour as much, especially in the country, where they participate with them the fatiguing labour of the plow. We very rarely see the English women employ'd in laborious works.

The effects of this wise œconomy are visible in every thing in the country, even in their animals; and the earth repays the husbandman with usury, what it costs him to have good horses, and feed them well. If he carries

ries his grain to market, he has one particularly for his own riding. But 'tis at horse-races especially that we see proofs of the comfortable lives the English farmers lead. There are none where you don't see two thousand countrymen, most of which have their wife, daughter or mistress behind them; and you often see great fat farmers wives galloping there, who are happy enough to have horses able to carry them. People never run after diversions, except when their family affairs don't require their presence at home.

'Tis pity this plenty which the English farmer enjoys, should make him so proud and insolent. He does not only dispute the road with those, whom the order of society has made his superiors, but sometimes jostles and insults them, for his pleasure. Whoever has forty shillings a year estate, gives his vote at elections for members of parliament; an English farmer is very proud of this privilege, and thinks more of making his advantage, than a good use of it. How happy would the English people be, if they had a right idea of all their advantages! But it does not appear that they are sensible of their value; for rich as they are, they are not the less venal for it. They do not reflect, that in making so bad a use of this privilege, they run the risque of loosing it; and that those who buy their votes, must naturally sell their own. Yet nevertheless, he sells his vote; and instead of giving it to the honestest man in the county,

gives

gives it to him, who gives him most beer. As the farmers live more comfortably here, than in many other countries; they are more addicted to drink here, than any where else. Nothing is so frequent as drunkenness among the common people of England. This vice is so habitual to some of them, that it deprives them of all other considerations; even that of death itself. Every body knows, that those unhappy wretches who are condemn'd to suffer the severity of justice; die contentedly, provided they die drunk. I'll tell you what happened some years since at Lincoln, a considerable large city, in this neighbourhood. Five or six wretches lay in the prison there, under sentence of death, for robbing on the highway: two days, before that of their execution, they found means to get out of the place in which they were confined, by breaking a hole through the wall; but unhappily for them, the place they got into, when escap'd out of the dungeon, was a cellar. They were heated with working, and finding good beer, drank so plentifully of it, that they were all found drunk in the cellar the next morning.

However, in the midst of this plenty, we easily perceive that the farmer is not so gay here, as in France; so that he may perhaps be richer, without being happier. The English of all ranks have that melancholy air, which makes part of their national character. The farmers here, shew very little mirth, even

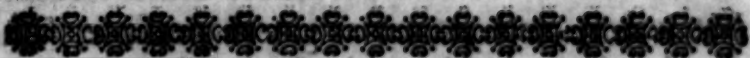
ven in their drunkenness ; whereas in France, the farmers in several provinces drink nothing but water, and yet are as gay as possible. The shepherd conducting his flock, the plowman leaning at his plow, the artificer in the midst of his work, even the most laborious ; in our country, every body sings : whether it be that the greatest part of them are insensible of the toils of their condition, or that they only sing to alleviate them, I shall not examine ; but they certainly either by constitution or reflection, take the wisest course.

The people in France are of a mild disposition, and satisfied with a little ; they are of all Europeans the best form'd for happiness, and I think their moderation proves, they very much deserve it. HENRY IV, who knew this, and admired it ; as soon as ever he had establish'd peace in his kingdom, found there was a necessity to ease the country. He, as wise a politician as a good prince ; desir'd those who cultivated the earth, should reap the fruits of it without bitterness. Death depriv'd France of him too soon. I wish a king, who loves his subjects, as much as the wise monarch under whose government we live, could execute this project ; so worthy of one of his ancestors, who called himself the father of his people.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

L E T-



## LETTER XXXIX.

To Mr. DU CLOS,

Member of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Let-  
tres.

*Of the favourable reception the works of MIL-  
TON, POPE and SWIFT, have met with  
in France; and observations on SHAKE-  
SPEAR'S tragedy of JULIUS CÆSAR, &c.*

STAMFORD, &amp;c.

SIR,

WE have had the works of various En-  
glish authors published within these  
few years, which have been very favourably  
receiv'd by us. The translator of MILTON,  
who has given the sublimity of that poet, with  
as much force and elevation of style as prose  
admits of, at least in our language, has made  
us admire *Paradise lost*: mr. POPE's two *Es-  
says*, which Abbé RESNEL has so happily  
translated into French verse, have receiv'd the  
applause they deserve; we have given a kind  
reception to all the works of Dr. SWIFT, that  
have been translated. But as to the English  
plays, which you would be glad to be ac-  
quainted with; the greatest part of them would  
find

find difficulty to succeed on our stage. The English tragedies are as contrary to our taste, as their comedies are to our manners. It would be very difficult even to give extracts out of them, in the taste of those which father BRUMOY has given of the Greek theatre. And tho' such an undertaking, might give satisfaction to men of learning: yet I doubt whether there would be any thing in it agreeable to the generality of mankind.

The first English dramatic writer, SHAKESPEAR, is without doubt, sir, a great poet; some beauties of his works, which have been translated into our language, are a proof of it: but intire translations, or literal extracts, of his best works, would do much prejudice to his reputation in France. Perhaps, in what is fine in his works, he does not yield to any author ancient or modern; 'tis pity he so often falls into what is low and childish. We should be as much displeased to read one of his tragedies quite through, as we should have pleasure to see an extract out of it. The admirable productions of his genius, are a perpetual contrast to those of his bad taste; at the conclusion of one of the finest scenes, you must expect something excessively ridiculous. In favour of these fine passages, the English pardon him for all the trash which his works are full of; we should not be so indulgent. Some dull scenes in CORNEILLE, prevent several of his plays being acted, in which there are many fine ones.

ones. *Sertorius* and *Otho* are tragedies, which we may look on as banished from the stage.

The English admire SHAKESPEAR extravagantly; should he be published in French, with all the merit he can have in his own language, we should abate much of the praise they bestow on him, and his admirers would never forgive us. We should be justly displeased to see the force and sublimity of the great CORNEILLE, continually joyn'd with low and trivial comick, puns, playing with words, and all the pitiful jests of our ancient tragedies, on the mysteries of our Saviour's passion.

I will content myself with giving you an example; 'tis a scene in the third act of his tragedy of JULIUS CÆSAR, where the genius of Shakespear raises itself as high, and falls as low, as possible. The celebrated mr. VOLTAIRE has already shewn the meaning of it; but that you may be the better able to judge of the author himself, I propose to give you his own words.

#### BRUTUS.

“ Romans, countrymen and friends, ! hear  
 “ me for my cause; and be silent, that you  
 “ may hear. Believe me for mine honour, and  
 “ have respect to mine honour, that you may  
 “ believe. Censure me in your wisdom, and  
 “ awake your senses that you may the better  
 “ judge. If there be any in this assembly, any  
 “ dear friend of CÆSAR's, to him I say, that  
 “ BRUTUS's love to CÆSAR, was no less than  
 “ his

" his. If then that friend demand, why  
 " Brutus rose against Cæsar, this is my  
 " answer; not that I loved Cæsar less, but  
 " that I lov'd Rome more. Had you rather  
 " Cæsar were living, to die all slaves; than  
 " that Cæsar were dead, to live all freemen?  
 " As Cæsar lov'd me, I weep for him; as he  
 " was fortunate, I rejoyce at it; as he was va-  
 " liant, I honour him; but as he was ambiti-  
 " ous, I slew him. There are tears for his  
 " love, joy for his fortune, honour for his va-  
 " lour, and death for his ambition. Who's  
 " here so base that would be a bond-man? If  
 " any, speak; for him have I offended.  
 " Who is here so rude, that would not be a  
 " Roman? If any, speak; for him have I of-  
 " fended. Who is here so vile, that will not  
 " love his country? If any, speak; for him have  
 " I offended.—I pause for a reply——

The People.

" None, BRUTUS, none.

BRUTUS.

" Then none have I offended—I have  
 " done no more to Cæsar, than you shall  
 " do to Brutus. The question of his death  
 " is inroll'd in the capitol; his glory not exte-  
 " nuated, wherein he was worthy; nor his of-  
 " fences enforc'd, for which he suffered death.

Enter MARK ANTHONY with CÆSAR'S

[Body.

" Here comes his body, mourn'd by Mark  
 " Anthony: who though he had no hand in  
 " his death, shall receive the benefit of his  
 Vol. I. X " dying

“ dying, a place in the common-wealth ; as  
 “ which of you shall not ? With this I de-  
 “ part, that as I slew my best lover, for the  
 “ good of Rome, I have the same dagger for  
 “ myself, when it shall please my country to  
 “ need my death.

Then ANTHONY speaks, and destroys the effects of this harangue, by another as pathetick. This act, in which there are these two master-peices, concludes with the lowest and most ridiculous comick. Anthony has no sooner inspir'd the people with an eagerness to revenge Cæsar's death, but a new person appears on the stage. The people throng eagerly about him, ask him his name, whither he is going, where he dwells, and if he is a married man, or a batchelor. He tells them, his name is Cinna ; and the people immediately cry out : *Tear him to pieces, he's a conspirator.* The poor wretch answers in a great fright, *I am Cinna the poet : I am Cinna the poet.* That signifies nothing : Replies the populace, *tear him for his bad verses.* Thus you see how all SHAKESPEAR'S tragick commonly ends, and how all his plays are variegated with pathetick scenes, and jocosé ones.

He changes the fourth act of the same play to the camp at Sardis. Brutus there reproaches Cassius with his avarice, not with a severe tone, but like a porter : and while these two generals are employed in the most weighty concerns ; another poet comes in and interrupts

interrupts them, only to be treated like a scoundrel, and kick'd out again.

In the fifth act, the scene is at Philippi. Before the battle is fought, there is a parley between Brutus and Cassius on one side, and Octavius and Anthony on the other. By the grossness of the abusive language they give each other, at this interview; one can't take them for Romans: and indeed you frequently discover the style of the author's godfather and godmother, in the persons SHAKESPEAR has introduc'd upon the stage. This poet, who paints nature without choice, does not hesitate to make Cæsar appear in his night-cap; by which you see how much he must degrade him, if 'tis true; that *no hero wears a night-gown*. In some of his plays, he makes his appear in deshabille; and sometimes he even represents them drunk.

Besides this, most of his works are neither tragedies, nor comedies; but what the English call *Historical Plays*: that is to say, the history of some prince put into dialogue, and diversify'd with the lowest buffoonry. Those who have patience enough to swallow the tiresomeness which reading them must occasion, are indemnify'd for it by the fine passages, which are here and there met with; for as SHAKESPEAR was a man of genius, the very worst of his plays preserves that character. His comick, always original, is sometimes happy. You find here and there exceeding good jests; but very often the actor's Tun-belly,

Or Great Hat, make most of the comic in his Part. Falstaff, so famous on the English stage, is commonly speaking, a buffoon like Dom Japhet d' Arménie ; except that this talks of nothing but empires and crowns, and the other of cutting purses, and robbing passengers.

With regard to style, 'tis that which distinguishes him most from the other poets of his nation ; he excells in that. He paints every thing he expresses in the most lively colours. He enlivens whatever he says. He speaks, if I may be allowed to say so, a language peculiar to himself ; which is the reason 'tis so difficult to translate him. It must however be acknowledg'd, that as his expressions are sometimes sublime, so he often runs into bombast. Thus, in this play of *Julius Cæsar*, PORTIA, the wife of BRUTUS, complains to him, that he hides things from her, and asks *if she dwells but in the suburbs of his good pleasure?* Would you imagine this ridiculous phrase could proceed from the author of the harangue you have just read ?

On the other hand, I cannot omit a passage in this tragedy, which, in my opinion, shews as much delicacy of wit, as the discourse of BRUTUS does elevation of style. DECIMUS says, speaking of CÆSAR :

- “ -----He loves to hear  
 “ That unicorns may be betray'd with trees,  
 “ And bears with glasses, elephants with holes,  
 “ Lions with toils, and men with flatterers :  
 “ But when I tell him he hates flatterers,  
 “ He says he does ; being then most flattered.

What-

Whatever wit and imagination are in SHAKESPEAR, none but those who read him in English, can rightly discover them. He can't be translated, without mutilating him in every page; and when he is mutilated, 'tis no longer himself.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



# LETTER XL.

To the Duke of NIVERNOIS.

*Of mr. WALLER. The English authors as much addicted to flattery as the French.*

LONDON, &c.

MY LORD DUKE,

**Y**OU desire me to inform you who that WALLER was, whom St. Evremond speaks of with such commendation. He is one of those authors, to whom English poetry has the greatest obligations. He is the first poet of that nation, who consulted harmony, in the placing of his words, and follow'd taste in the choice of his ideas. He is as genteel, and more natural than VOITURE; has as much life, and is more correct than CHAULIEU. He is in the opinion of criticks, the most

amiable and correctest of all the English poets.

I will give you a specimen of the taste which his works are full of; 'tis a small piece, which he wrote for the beautiful countess of SUNDERLAND, whom he was in love with.

*The story of PHOEBUS and DAPHNE applied.*

THIRIS, a youth of the inspired train,  
Fair SACHARISSA lov'd, but lov'd in vain:  
Like PHOEBUS sung the no less am'rous boy;  
Like DAPHNE she as lovely and as coy:  
With numbers he the flying nymph pursues,  
With numbers such as PHOEBUS self might  
use.

Such is the chace, when love and fancy  
leads,

O'er craggy mountains, or thro' flow'ry  
meads;

Invok'd to testify the lover's care,

Or form some image of his cruel fair:

Urg'd with his fury like a wounded deer,

O'er these he fled, and now approaching near,

Had reach'd the nymph with his harmonious  
lay,

Whom all his charms cou'd not incline to  
stay;

Yet what he sung in his immortal strain,

Though unsuccessful, was not sung in vain:

All but the nymph, that should redress his  
wrong,

Attend his passion, and reprove his song.

Like

Like PHOEBUS thus, acquiring unsought praise,  
He catch'd at love, and fill'd his arms with bays.

Among the poets which we have at this time in France, I know one who could give this piece all the beauties of the original; and who, indeed, with regard to genius, perfectly resembles WALLER. He that I speak of, as eminent for his birth as for his genius, has had ancestors, who, like himself, have thought it an honour to cultivate this lovely science. 'Tis the poet of our age, whose verses abound most with noble sentiments and delicacy. Can't you guess him?

CLARENDON makes great encomiums on WALLER's honesty, but if he was a man of probity, he was of a timorous disposition. He chang'd his manner of thinking according to times and circumstances. There are few poets who have flatter'd their sovereigns so much; and this defect is the more conspicuous in him, as there are perhaps few, who have liv'd under the government of so many different princes. In his works, JAMES I, is the greatest of kings; his son CHARLES who succeeds him, immediately surpasses him: and CROMWELL is greater than either of them. CHARLES II, is no sooner re-establish'd on the throne, than he eclipses the protector; and is himself afterwards eclips'd by his brother JAMES II. Lastly, according to him; *The prince on the throne, is always the greatest.*

How much do these panegyricks, which are so contradictory to each other, degrade their author? This will disgrace WALLER to all posterity. They will blame the mean and mercenary use he made of his fine talent, as much as they will praise it. And thus, at this time, the pomp of LUCAN's verse, only sets the meanness of his soul, in a clearer light. We can't, without indignation, read the extravagant praises he has lavish'd on NERO; which, nevertheless, did not prevent his falling a victim to that monster.

You see the English poets are to blame, in charging ours with flattery, as a vice peculiar to them. Perhaps, the celebrated DRYDEN, ROWE, ADDISON, and Dr. GARTH, have carry'd it farther, than any writer of what nation soever. Notwithstanding the praise the English bestow on this last author, on account of his *dispensary*, which is only an imitation of the *Lutrin*; he has not surpassed BOILEAU except in exaggerating the praises, he has copied from him, to celebrate king WILLIAM. This is what he says of that prince, who shew'd all Europe his ambition, as well as the great qualities join'd with it.

*Some princes claims from devastations spring,  
He condescends in pity to be king.*

Where shall we find examples of grosser flattery? Whether it be, that we too readily believe what good the English say of themselves; or that those of us who have writ on that subject,

ject, have made the greater encomiums on them, to criticise on their own countrymen ; our notions with regard to them, are false in many respects.

We imagine their authors not so much addicted to flattery as ours ; it would be tedious to examine by facts, whether this is not too favourable an opinion of them : we need only reflect on the party-spirit which reigns in England, to perceive that the same principle, which makes their authors so excessively satirical, must also make them as extravagant in their panegyrics. Party-zeal exaggerates every thing, because 'tis always either blind, or unjust ; and being equally employ'd both in pulling down, and building up, takes all liberties to depreciate the one, and extol the other. An author who writes the most bitter satire, against very honest people, only because they do not think as he does ; lavishes the grossest flattery, on men without merit, when they embrace his sentiments. According to mr. POPE, whoever opposes the present ministry, is a hero ; and every partisan of the court, a traitor to his country.

I do not know which of our authors it was, that has praised the English, for being less prodigal of *dedicatory epistles*, than we are ; and more discreet in those which they do write. He had probably read very few of their works. Almost all their theatrical pieces, as well as ours, are attended by this sort of passport. Every woman, to whom a comedy is dedicated,

is always, for sprightliness of wit, the surprize ; and fineness of taste, the pattern of her age ; when frequently her approbation of the performance, is the only proof the author can alledge, both of the one and the other : nay, they often dedicate plays to women, whose bashfulness and modesty they celebrate ; the plots of which are so lewd, that they ought not to be permitted to be printed, in a well civiliz'd country. There is not one of DRYDEN's plays, at the head of which he does not lavish his flattery, more meanly than any author I know of ; as insipid in his praise, as bitter in his satire, he does not stick in both of them, to sacrifice truth to his passions, or interest.

Were we to believe the authors of all these little panegyrics ; England is peopled with Romans. If a baronet lives in the country, to improve his estate, or enjoy the sweets of a country life ; they make him an *Atticus*. A member of the house of commons, has no sooner rail'd at the minister, in that house ; than he becomes a *Cicero* : and if 'tis some factious spirit, who occasions much talk of himself ; he is a *Cato*, who leaves no stone unturn'd, to save the commonwealth.

Some pretend, they pay better for this flattery in England, than in France ; but I will not enter into a discussion, which could only discover the mercenary disposition of authors : nor will I even suspect their praises proceed from a motive, which would make them so  
con-

contemptible. This is certain, that the nobility here are very fond of dedications. The duke of SHREWSBURY, who had a great desire to have BAYLE's dictionary dedicated to him; made him an offer of two hundred guineas, to do it. The philosopher, who was perhaps more generous, than even the English peer, had the generosity and courage to refuse them. Such a disinterestedness, must do honour to the memory of BAYLE; and the offer, on the contrary, seems to shew the vanity, more than the generosity of the Englishman.

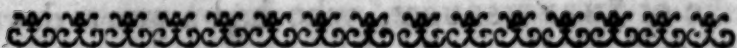
Don't let us take the English in all these respects for our masters. 'Tis very true that they are bolder, more severe, and perhaps more nervous in their satire, than we are; and I am undetermin'd whether we ought to envy them this advantage: but then they are not less extravagant in their panegyrics. These sorts of tribute, which we pay to friendship, esteem, or gratitude; if they are not weigh'd in the scales of truth, ought at least to be weigh'd in those of probability. Extravagant praise, only tends to make both the giver and receiver of it ridiculous.

I have the honour to be,

My lord duke,

Your most humble, &c,

L E T-



## L E T T E R   X L I .

To Monsieur DE BUFFONS;

*Of the English taste for gardening and plantations; their many valuable authors on those subjects; and the great improvements made in natural and experimental philosophy, by the Royal Society at London.*

STAMFORD, &amp;c.

S I R,

I Shall have the pleasure to satisfy you, and entertain you to day, with the taste which the English have for gardening and plantations; and of the wonderful effects this taste has produc'd in their country. I shall say nothing of their ability in this respect, you know it better than I do; and are yourself so well acquainted with every thing that regards gardening, and the culture of trees; that you are even able to give instructions to the English themselves. Your penetrating genius has made you discover very early, what others learn only by experience; and you have had from your infancy a taste for what is commonly the fruits of old age. For who besides yourself, ever thought of planting trees at eighteen years of age? For even in England,  
where

where they have tried every thing, attempted every thing ; has any one had the courage to set apart an hundred acres of his land, to make experiments on trees ? They pretend that SOLOMON, who was acquainted with every plant and tree, from the *byssop* to the *cedar* ; wrote a book on the manner of cultivating trees and plants, which we have lost : tell the truth, sir, did not you find it ? If not, nobody since so many ages, has been more capable of repairing that loss. You will do great service, not only to our nation, but to mankind in general ; when you shall please to impart to the public, the fruit of your observations. All studies are commendable, all the sciences are valuable ; but men who are reasonable enough to judge of things, by their utility ; will not hesitate to place agriculture in the first rank. A man of learning, who employs his talents so usefully for the commonwealth, participates of the dignity of a minister of state.

You know, sir, that this is the way of thinking in this country ; which is inhabited by people of your taste. The gardeners are not the only people who apply themselves to gardening here ; or rather, the English are all gardeners, more or less. The farmer in easy circumstances, and the rich citizen, equally love planting ; the nobility, and even many philosophers, like you ; make it their favourite occupation. Mr. PERAULT, in his *lives of the illustrious men of France*, remarks, that Mr. ARNAULD D'ANDILLY, after seven or eight hours

hours study every day, diverted himself by taking the pleasures of the country, and particularly with planting trees. And in this manner mr. Pope lives, in his pleasant house at Twickenham. Such a life must have very powerful charms; Diocletian abdicated the empire to enjoy the sweets of it; and when they came, in the pressing necessities of the state, to beg of him to take upon him again, the care of it; he answer'd those who requested him to do it; *You would not give me this advice, if you had seen the fine row of trees, which I have myself planted, and the fine melons which I have sown.*

As amongst the Romans, a Cato did not disdain to write upon Agriculture; so we must own to the honour of the English, that some of their most eminent authors, have publish'd very instructing works, on this subject. SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE, one of their best writers, has publish'd a very curious treatise on ancient and modern gardening; mr. EVELYN's treatise on forest trees is an excellent book. Mr. Mortimer has publish'd a treatise of husbandry, equally agreeable and useful. The celebrated mr. BRADLEY \* has wrote very successfully on the same subject. But who is better acquainted with all these works than you are?

To say this is one branch of knowledge, in which the English excell, is celebrating their praise; as 'tis the most important part of natural philosophy. No other nation has

\* The Author seems to confound Bradley the gardener with our learned astronomer royal of the same name.

has so many useful books on this subject; amongst which I must not forget the dictionary of mr. Miller, who is the best gardener at this time in Europe. It were to be wished that somebody took the pains, to translate these works into our language; they would be of more service to us, than the silly productions, which tasteless authors have prefer'd to them. You certainly set them an example worthy of imitation; when, purely out of love to natural philosophy, and to facilitate the progress of those who study it, you was pleased to interrupt your particular occupations, to translate dr. Hales's *Vegetable Statics*; \* the best author the English have on this subject.

We see by all these Books on gardening, that it must be better understood here, than any where else; and indeed fruits and pulse are no where cultivated with so much care and industry. Though the climate is not so favourable here, as in France, they have carryed the art much farther. You find in the markets at London, green pease more early than at Paris, and pine apples at all seasons; and various sorts of pulse, which we have not, are very common. Brocoli, which is still so rare with us, they eat here in the publick-houses. In the gardens round about London, you find all sorts of melons of every country; they have excellent peaches there; and I have myself

\* This work was printed at Paris, in 1735, by James Vincent.

myself gather'd very good figs, in the north of England. What does not art and industry overcome? Nature herself submits to the efforts of man, when he is resolutely determin'd to conquer her. I have seen a fine example of this at a place near Kensington; remarkable for an old house, whither, the famous CROMWELL, to whom it belong'd; used to go, to relieve himself from the fatigues of his usurpation. The present owner of this house, has quite another ambition; he has undertaken to force nature there: and notwithstanding the ungratefulness both of the situation and soil, he has turned a dismal and barren morass into a pleasant vineyard, which produces him a large quantity grapes; and made me taste some wine of this growth, which is not disagreeable. He sent some of it last year, to the English ambassador in France; and this wine such as it is, produces this industrious Englishman, more than any thing else he could have sown, or planted in his inclosure.

You do not only find fruit-trees of all countries in England, but you also find a prodigious quantity of those trees, which have no other worth, but their beauty, or the singularity of their form. The English import all sorts of trees, at a great expence, from different parts of the world; and those which thrive in the open air, they naturalise, and adorn their gardens with them. Thus we find here the cedar of Libanus, the Persian plane-tree, the tulip-tree of the Iroquois, the *arbor Judæ*, &c.

&c. The same commerce, that assembles men of all nations upon the royal exchange in London, stocks the English gardens with trees of all climates. The English, in making this use of their riches, seem to me much wiser than those amongst us, who ruin themselves by changing their equipages every six months, and their snuff-boxes every week.

What makes the English love planting more than us, is, that those who by their birth or riches, are of the greatest distinction in the state, live more in the country, than those of the same rank do with us. Exclusive of the real usefulness of plantations, they are one of the greatest sources of country amusements. As the nobility set the fashion to their inferiours, the farmer plants in imitation of his landlord. As he has groves of laurels, linden-trees, and phillyrea's, in his gardens; his farmer will at least have a little model of it in his. In our villages, the farmers seldom plant any thing but apple-trees and cabbage; the English farmer has not only a kitchen-garden well furnish'd and kept in good order, but if there are two fathoms of ground, before his house, which belongs to him; he makes a flower-garden of it, where he cultivates the rose and lilly of the valley; a sufficient proof of his easy circumstances. They seldom employ themselves in cultivating flowers, but when there seems to be a promising appearance of a good harvest.

We must acknowledge to the honour of the Royal Society at London, that 'tis its continual attention to the public good, has procur'd England all these advantages; there are arts which it has carried to the highest perfection, as naval architecture, and every thing that concerns the ease and safety of navigation: and there are others it has rous'd from the fatal lethargy, they had so long been in. 'Tis this learned society that has made agriculture honourable; 'tis their care, their labours, and their experiments have shewn the English, what a source of riches plantations may be. The Royal Society are the cause, that not only in England, but in Scotland and Ireland; in Virginia, Jamaica, Barbadoes, and all countries subject to the English, they plant woods, orchards, &c. and every body imbellishes his estate, by enriching it. They have lately planted the tea tree in Carolina, and pretend that it prospers very well. Let us do justice to so many illustrious learned men, who have acquir'd this society, so great a reputation over all Europe. 'Tis they have most enlighten'd the learned and civiliz'd world, with regard to all the benefits society may reap, from the different branches of experimental philosophy.

It will not be your fault, sir, if we don't follow the wise example of our neighbours. You have not yet given in one memoire to the academy; you have not yet made one experiment, the immediate end of which, was  
not

not the public good. The perfection of arts, ought to be the sole object of geometry. We have amus'd ourselves too much hitherto with that which they call *transcendent*, but what would be more properly term'd, *useless*. All the discoveries we can make in it, are conquests that do not enrich us; the infinite spaces, we there run through, are only imaginary; geniuses of a superior class, are made to know them, but not to dwell there. We look upon hypotheses, as the chimerical productions of disorder'd heads; let us act accordingly, and not be afraid to rank amongst useless employments, those whose foundations are so imaginary. 'Tis abusing geometry, to make use of it only in calculating riddles; for such I term those arbitrary questions, which they perplex, on purpose to have the pleasure of explaining them by calculations: and when they have done it, reap no other benefit, than the merit of having overcome the difficulty. How many problems are nothing but riddles, more complicated than Mercury's symbols, and as useless for the advancement of our knowledge! Men of learning ought to set such a value on themselves, as to think they are accountable to the state, for the fruit of their labours. The highest reputation, among a few particular persons, who esteem none but those of their own taste; is not worth that sort of public regard, which they infallibly acquire, who are

solely employ'd in promoting the advantage of  
their fellow subjects.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



## L E T T E R   XLII.

To the Marquis du T \* \* \*.

*The manner how the English spend their time at  
table; the ceremony of toasts, &c.*

STAMFORD, &c.

MY LORD,

**D**ON'T be surpris'd that I stay so long  
in the country; I am here, in one of  
the most agreeable parts of England, and with  
the most amiable people in the world; peo-  
ple, who have none of the prejudices of their  
nation, and against whom ours would have  
none; who join to the qualities, on which  
the safety of society depends, those which make  
it agreeable; such as you yourself would be  
in love with, and who would know your va-  
lue; such as your conversation would make  
French, and by whose company, you would  
yourself imperceptibly become an Englishman.  
And though in this agreeable retirement, the  
seat of pleasure and liberty, they don't think  
in

in all respects as we do ; they live at least exactly in the same manner. The way of living at London, has fallen heavy on me more than once, notwithstanding the restraints I constantly laid myself under.

The pleasures of the table, vary according to the different nations. Some make them consist in the choice of the company, some nice dishes, and the sociableness and good humour of the guests; and others make more account of the plenty of liquors, than the choice of the dishes; and study more to drown care with the fumes of wine, than dissipate it by the charms of conversation. At London, they usually meet, more to drink in a melancholly manner, to each others health ; than converse together with that freedom, which the table commonly gives.

When they drank harder in France, than they do at present; this custom of drinking each others health, was also more frequent. It seems to derive its birth from intemperance. Men were so sensible of the unreasonableness of drinking to excess, that they invented this sort of politeness, to palliate the vice ; by which means they have found a way to gratify their taste, and force, as I may say, others to conform to it. In this sense, the more intemperate people are, the more polite ; and the English have carried this sort of politeness very far. If there are any French, who can dispute the prize with them ; they are very rarely to be met with, except amongst those, who

derive both their original and name, from the the ancient inhabitants of this island. Drunkenness, since I must name it, is very common here, among people of all ranks; HOBBS considers it, as an infringement of the laws of nature; because it hinders the use of reason: 'tis surprising therefore that a nation, which lays the greatest pretensions to good sense; notwithstanding blush the least at a vice, that is the most contradictory to it.

Deserts are very little used in England; a good butler is more esteem'd here, than a confectioner would be, had he all the ability and fine taste of Procopius. Even at tables where they serve deserts, they do but just shew them, and presently take away every thing, to the very table-cloth. By this the English, whom politeness does not permit to tell the ladies, their company is troublesome to them; give them notice to retire, when they are weary of them: and school-boys don't shew more joy, when their master goes out of school; than the guests do, when they take leave of them. The satisfaction that appears in their looks, shews the pleasure they feel; on finding themselves freed from the restraint, the company of women laid them under: and notwithstanding the little attention they pay them, the women always seem'd to me, to retire with as much regret; as the men shew'd satisfaction, at seeing them leave the room. The table is immediately cover'd with mugs, bottles and glasses; and often with pipes and tobacco: and  
all

all things thus disposed, the ceremony of Toasts begins. As I do not believe any body who has writ of the manners and ceremonies of nations, has treated of this custom; 'tis proper I should inform you of it.

The English call the healths of absent persons, Toasts; which all the company reciprocally propose, and all are oblig'd to drink, on pain of the greatest unpoliteness. I leave others to enquire into the etymology of this word, and the antiquity of the custom. Perhaps the English derive it from the Goths, who are said to have been hard-drinkers; and if so, they have the glory of having brought it to greater perfection. The young man toasts his mistress's health; the honest tradesman, his correspondent's; and the grave ecclesiastick, his Bishop's. As to the Bishop, he has that of his primate; and the primate may, if he pleases, drink to his guests *Prosperity to the protestant cause*, or any other Toast he thinks proper.

The master of the house, is the person who begins these rounds, and is oblig'd to take care of their order and exactness; both with regard to the manner of giving, and drinking the Toasts, and to prevent any deviation from the rule, which obliges all the company to drink equally alike. This is an abridgement of the ceremony of Toasts. The partisans of the court, drink the health of the king, and all the royal family; those who oppose the court,

my lord CARTERET's, mr. PULTNEY's, and of all those who oppose the minister. The Jacobites drink the Pretender's health.

'Tis customary also, to toast the reigning beauties, even those they know only by sight; and by this means a coxcomb gives himself the air of a man of fortune. The ladies themselves are pleased at this, when they come to hear of it, as this publick homage paid to their charms, is a proof of their fame. An Englishman who has spent three weeks at Paris, thinks it an honour to toast Mademoiselle Gauffin. Thus to make an encomium on a young beauty, they say, *she is one of the first Toasts in England*. She, on the contrary, whose lillies and roses time has faded, is called a *cast-off Toast*. A man would appear ridiculous to some sort of people, who should have the misfortune to give for his Toast, a beauty whose charms are faded. A man must be acquainted with the map of London, not to commit such an absurdity.

Thus the Romans at their entertainments, drank round in a cup made on purpose, which they called the *Magisterial cup*, the healths of all their friends; and if it was their mistress's, gallantry oblig'd them to drink as many cups, as there were letters in her name.

The men of learning in this country, tho' they submit themselves very little to the other customs of the nation; are very exact observers of this ceremony of Toasts. They practice it the most frequently, and with the greatest solemnity.

lemnity. Every one in his way, toasts not only them of his own nation, but even the most eminent foreigners. I have had mr. BERNOULLI, mr. EULER, mr. MAUPERTUIS, mr. BUFFONS, &c. toasted to me.

In the colleges, I have also heard, they sometimes toast in Latin and Greek. For my part, I never assisted at the noble sacrifices, which the gentlemen of Oxford and Cambridge offer to Bacchus. I did not dare to push my inquiry, into the manners of the doctors of those two famous universities, so far.

These healths and these rounds very often continue, 'till they can continue them no longer. In the country as long as they last, they talk of nothing, but horses and hunting; or else only drink and smoak: I know an Englishman, who every time you press him to speak, says; *Talking spoils conversation*. In town, they entertain themselves with the affairs of parliament, the stocks, and the Spanish galleons.

The ladies, who during this time are in another apartment, don't drink much less, but without running the same hazard; they drink tea; which they use morning and evening, 'till they can hardly breath: this contributes to augment their natural inclination to silence; which is however, perhaps more supportable, than the eternal clack of some of our Frenchwomen.

If they dine in taverns, which are very much frequented at London, by persons of all ranks; the

the *Toasts* vary still more; very frequently after having drank to the health of their friends, they drink to the ruin, and damnation of their enemies. There is then no sort of mad pranks they do not think of, to excite one another to drink.

Some years since, some young men of quality chose to abandon themselves to this sort of debauchery, on the 30th of January; a day appointed by the church of England for a general fast, to expiate the murther of king CHARLES I; whom they honour as a martyr. As soon as ever they were heated with wine, they began to sing: this gave great offence to the people, who stopp'd before the tavern, and gave them abusive language. One of these rash young men, put his head out of the window, and drank to the memory of the army, which dethron'd this king, and of the rebels, who cut off his head upon a scaffold. The stones immediately flew from all parts; the furious populace broke the windows of the house, and would have set fire to it; and these silly young men had a great deal of difficulty to save themselves.\*

This is one of those follies, which wine makes us capable of committing; and of which  
we

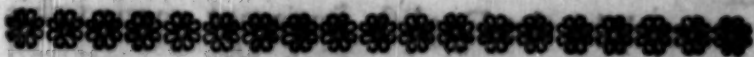
\* An English clergyman, who could not bear the people should drink to the memory of king WILLIAM; wrote a pamphlet against the custom, of drinking to the memory of any person whatsoever; as being a profanation of the holy sacrament. In several other works, the use of toasts is condemn'd, as contrary to christianity.

we every where find examples : and thus a man as unreasonable, as intemperate, converts what kind nature has given us only for our pleasure, into a source of troubles and disorders.

I have the honour to be,

My lord,

Your most humble, &c.



## LETTER XLIII.

To Abbé L \* C \* \* \*.

*Of the English sermons, the want of action in English orators ; and the decay of true eloquence in France.*

GRANTHAM, &c.

S I R,

**Y**OU inform me indeed of your employment, but say not a word of your success ; however, don't imagine that our friends have not acquainted me, with what your modesty conceals. I know with what applause you appear every day in the pulpit. Go on, sir, you have taken the road that leads to the most solid glory, and even the most flattering ; if a preacher were permitted to listen to the voice of self-love. What function is there more noble, both for a gentleman, and a christian,

an, than to contribute to the benefit of religion and of society ; to wage war against vice, which dishonours the one, and disturbs the harmony of the other ; to give virtue her just tribute of praise ; to recall men to their duty, and consequently to their true interest ; and lastly, to speak the truth in the pulpit, the only place where her voice is heard by great men !

It methinks the English have not carried this sort of eloquence, of which the Greek and Latin fathers have left us such fine patterns, so far as we have done. FOSTER, WAKE, SHARPE, Dr. SHERLOCK and Dr. CLARKE, are not preachers comparable in my opinion to our BOSSUETS, FLECHIER, CHEMINAIS and BOURDALOUES. The sermons of Dr. SPRAT, bishop of Rochester, are written in an affected style. Dr. TILLOTSON, archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of CHARLES II ; is the most eminent of all the English preachers, and most worthy of esteem. His sermons, however, are more commendable for the purity and elegance of his style, than for rhetoric. One finds in his works, more grace than energy ; more argument than pathetic : you read them with pleasure, but they do not move.

Action is one of the most essential qualifications of an orator ; whether it be natural or acquir'd by art, if he has the happiness to have it ; the delivery of an ordinary discourse will have a very great effect upon his auditors. This part of the orator the English want entirely.

tirely. Our orators, says mr. ADDISON, both at the bar, and in the pulpit, are chargeable with a defect; and that is their want of action and gesture, which our modesty perhaps is the cause of: our preachers are like logs in the pulpit, and would not stir a finger, to set off the finest sermon in the world. At the bar, and in all public places of disputation, we find the same statues. We can talk of life and death in cold blood, and preserve our tranquility in discourses on which all that is dear to us depends. How shall we reconcile what this sensible author says, with the manner in which affairs are debated in the house of commons; and the calmness which he speaks of, with the passion, and sometimes abusive language which one hears there? A member of that house at present, gives us a very different idea of it, and we cannot but commend his wise reflections. When in the heat of a debate, says he, upon important points, the warmth of the disputants makes them exceed the bounds of decency and politeness, we must impute it to the frailty of our nature. Nobody ought to put a more severe construction upon an expression which may be dropp'd, than it necessarily implies.

'Tis neither commendable nor useful to have recourse to calumny and reproaches----- universal candour and mutual regard will tend more to secure our repose, and better support the dignity that is agreeable to this house; and which cannot be violoted without dangerous consequences.

ces. You see this discourse intirely effaces the idea mr. Addison would give of the English; but the most reasonable of them are not so always so, with regard to their own nation. What they may be justly charged with as defects, they have the art of converting to their praise; if they are not eloquent, 'tis because they had rather be reasonable; if they want gracefulness, 'tis because their taste for plainness makes them despise it.

The custom of reading sermons in England, is an obstacle to all action; and consequently makes the discourse less pathetick. He who preaches without book, always moves more; because he is more affected himself. Nevertheless an author, \* who perhaps had not duly reflected on the advantages preaching may receive from oratory, propos'd to the English Bishops, to collect a series out of the printed sermons, for the whole year; and to suffer none else to be read in the pulpit for the future. What would have been the consequence, if they had followed the advice of his rash zeal? That the readers of those sermons, being not animated with the heat of those who compos'd them, would have been still more lifeless; and that by such a regulation, they would have put a total stop to the small progress, the eloquence of the pulpit has made in England.

We

\* Sir WILLIAM PETTY.

We have been happier than the English; perhaps at this time, we are not so wise. I say this to you, sir, who are capable of knowing it, and whose sound judgment must preserve you from the contagion of example. We have deviated from our models, to adopt a taste, absolutely contrary to true eloquence; and what happen'd to the Romans, is happen'd to us. The natural no longer moves us; the fine simple and majestick are tiresome to us. Like people, whose vitiated palates can taste nothing but strong liquors; we must have flashes of wit and flights of imagination, witty portraits, strings of antitheses, and a style full of epigrams to move us: in short, we give our whole attention to trifles, and neglect the main point. Our modern preachers and architects have much the same taste. Our buildings are overcharg'd with ornaments, but the architecture is worth nothing; our sermons are full of wit, but have not the least eloquence in them. True orators, have always thought this search after graces, an ornament unworthy of the majesty of eloquence. That of our moderns, by glittering too much, only dazzles us; that of the CICEROS and BOSSUETS, lights us.

'Tis the same also in our poetry, they make good verses, but they make no poems. In all sorts of it, they will have nothing but wit; without perceiving, that when there is too much of it, 'tis folly. 'Tis the phrensy of our age to imagine, that wit is more common  
in

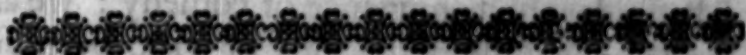
in this, than 'twas in the last; and there is not a woman who does not give you as an instance of it, that they shew more of it, in works of all sorts at this time, than you find in those of the age of LEWIS XIV. I shall however venture to assert a paradox, which I make on purpose to surprise; this superabundant wit, which our modern writings are full of, is perhaps the effect of our sterility. We shew all we have, to impose on others; the authors of the last age, who were sure to please, made use of none but what was necessary. They knew their riches, and how to make a proper use of them. Those who affect to shew wit, in all parts of their writings, are with regard to those wise authors; what pedlars are, who having but little, are oblig'd to shew all they have, to invite customers, compar'd to wholesale-dealers; who being certain they have what will please all comers, expose no more to view, than just what is necessary to shew what they are. The discreet use RACINE and DESPREAUX have made of their wit, is an equal proof, both of their superiority in that, and of their wisdom. They wrote with a noble simplicity of style, in imitation of the good authors of the Augustan age; such as VIRGIL, CICERO, LIVY, &c. However fine the genius of those was, who came after them, their taste was deprav'd. TACITUS only aims at expressing himself in an uncommon style; 'tis nothing but ornaments, that give SENECA an air  
of

of grandure; and his endeavours to affect it, convince us 'tis unnatural. These are, unhappily, the authors our moderns seem to imitate. We run after wit, our eloquence is larded with it; and we lose taste, proportionably to our distance from those happy times, in which almost all the arts were carried to their highest degree of perfection in France.

Acknowledge, sir, we have already strayed so far, that if we do not immediately return, we run the hazard of losing ourselves; and shall have great need of a Quintilian, to put us again into the right way.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



## LETTER XLIV.

To Monsieur DE LA CHAUSSEE;

*Remarks on sir RICHARD STEELE's Conscious Lovers, and mr. de la CHAUSSEE's Ecole des amis.*

GRANTHAM, &c.

SIR,

YOU might be very well assur'd, when you sent me your \* *Ecole des amis*, of the pleasure I should have in reading it. I

Vol. I.

Z

had

\* School of friendship.

had already heard of its success, and was not surpris'd at it. The public take a pleasure in doing you justice. A talent rises in value by the use made of it. Your works tend equally to instruct and amuse mankind: the fictions with which you imbellish morality, only make it more beneficial, by making it more agreeable. As in the performances of others, reason drolls, and becomes subservient to our follies, to make us the more sensible of their ridiculousness; in yours 'tis a friend who gains our confidence, and cures us of our failings, by shewing us the danger of them.

Continue, sir, to labour, in a manner, that does equal honour both to our theatre and yourself; whatever tends to correct manners, falls under the cognizance of comedy: we are made as sensible of the folly of vice, by moving the heart, as by diverting the understanding. In the only comedy of CORNEILLE, which is played now a days; an old man's reproaching his son, with the shame which is inseparable from lying, does not less expose the meanness of that vice, than the merriest passages in that play. Yours, sir, are full of this sort of beauties; and will reconcile to the theatre, those which the licentiousness of our old comedies had driven from it. Despise what those worthless authors say, whose business it is, to criticise upon every thing, because they live by it; and who have neither sense, nor honour enough, to follow any other. Their censures, as severe as unjust, equally

ex-

expose the vileness of their hearts and their want of judgment. Censure is a tribute, merit is oblig'd to pay to the ill nature of mankind. In the Roman triumphs, decreed to conquerors; it was permitted to exalt its voice, among the public acclamations of joy and thanks; however, none but the most worthless men made use of this privilege.

This sort of comedy, in which you excell, is not so new, as those ignorant, or lying critics pretend. *TERENCE's Andria* is a proof of it. Our neighbours have long since given us a pattern of this sort; and in general, they succeed better in moving scenes, than merry ones. The comic in their theatrical pieces, is often over-strain'd, but the passion is always true. He, who translated the *Andria* into French, has not taken from it all that he might have done on the subject. *Mr. STEELE*, who has adapted it to the manners of his nation, has made it one of the best comedies on the English stage.\* The scene in the fourth act, for which he wrote this play, as he ingenuously owns in his preface, is extremely fine, and entirely his own. 'Tis perfectly in your taste; and since I can offer you nothing of my own, which can give you the pleasure, your *Ecole des amis* has given me; I send you this scene, to convince you of my desire to be out of your debt. 'Tis not necessary, for your understanding of it, to acquaint you with the characters; it will be sufficient to tell you the different

Z 2

\* The Conscious Lovers.

different interests of the persons, the author introduces into it. Mr. BEVIL and mr. MYRTLE are two friends. The first has the most tender passion for Indiana; ('tis Terence's Andria) but his father will have him marry Lucinda, whom mr. Myrtle is in love with.

## A C T IV.

S C E N E, Bevil, jun. Lodgings.

BEVIL, jun. *with a letter in his hand following*  
[*low'd by TOM.*]

TOM.

" Upon my life, fir, I know nothing of the  
" matter; I never open'd my lips to mr. Myr-  
" tle, about any thing of your honour's letter  
" to madam Lucinda.

BEVIL.

" What is the fool in such a fright for? I  
" don't suppose you did: what I would know  
" is, whether mr. Myrtle shew'd any suspici-  
" on, or ask'd you any question, to lead you  
" to say casually, that you had carried any  
" such letter for me this morning.

TOM.

" Why, fir, if he did ask me any questions,  
" how could I help it?

BEVIL.

" I don't say you could, oaf! I am not  
" questioning you, but him: what did he say  
" to you?

TOM.

TOM.

" Why, fir, when I came to his chambers  
 " to be drefs'd for the lawyer's part, your  
 " honour was pleas'd to put me upon, he  
 " ask'd me if I had been at mr. Sealand's this  
 " morning?---So I told him, fir, I often went  
 " thither---because, fir, if I had not said that,  
 " he might have thought, there was some-  
 " thing more, in my going now, than at ano-  
 " ther time.

BEVIL.

" Very well! The fellow's caution, I find,  
 " has given him this jealousy, (*afide*) did he  
 " ask you no other questions?

TOM.

" Yes, fir,---now I remember, as we came  
 " away in the hackney-coach, from mr. Sea-  
 " land's, Tom, says he, as I came in to your  
 " master this morning, he bade you go for an  
 " answer to a letter he had sent. Pray did you  
 " bring him any? says he---Ah! says I, fir,  
 " your honour is pleas'd to joke with me, you  
 " have a mind to know, whether I can keep  
 " a secret or no?

BEVIL.

" And so, by shewing him you could, you  
 " told him you had one?

TOM.

" Sir.

BEVIL.

(*confus'd*)

" What mean actions does jealousy make a  
 " man stoop to? how poorly has he us'd art,  
 Z 3 with

" with a servant, to make him betray his ma-  
 " ster ? well ! and when did he give you this  
 " letter for me ?

TOM.

" Sir, he writ it, before he pull'd off his  
 " lawyer's gown, at his own chambers.

BEVIL.

" Very well ; and what did he say, when  
 " you brought him my answer to it.

TOM.

" He look'd a little out of humour, sir,  
 " and said, it was very well.

BEVIL.

" I knew he would look grave upon't,----  
 " wait without.

TOM.

" Hum ! 'gad, I don't like this ; I am afraid  
 " we are all in the wrong box here-----

(*exit Tom*)

BEVIL.

" I put on a serenity, while my fellow was  
 " present ; but I have never been more tho-  
 " roughly disturb'd ; this hot man ! to write  
 " me a challenge, on supposed artificial dea-  
 " ling, when I profess'd myself his friend ! I  
 " can live contented without glory ; but I can-  
 " not suffer shame. What's to be done ? But  
 " first, let me consider LUCINDA's letter again,  
 (reads)

SIR,

*I hope it is consistent with the laws a woman  
 ought to impose upon herself, to acknowledge,  
 that your manner of declining a treaty of marri-  
 age,*

*age, in our family, and desiring the refusal may come from me, has something more engaging in it, than the courtship of him, who, I fear, will fall to my lot; except your friend exerts himself, for our common safety and happiness: I have reasons for desiring Mr. Myrtle may not know of this letter, 'till hereafter, and am your most obliged humble servant,*

LUCINDA SEALAND.

Well, but the postscript.

(reads)

*I won't upon second thought, hide any thing from you. But, my reason for concealing this is, that Mr. Myrtle has a jealousy in his temper, which gives me some terrors; but my esteem for him inclines me to hope that only an ill effect, which sometimes accompanies a tender love; and what may be cured, by a careful and unblameable conduct.*

“ Thus has this lady made me her friend  
 “ and confident, and put herself, in a kind,  
 “ under my protection: I cannot tell him im-  
 “ mediately the purport of her letter, except  
 “ I could cure him of the violent and untrac-  
 “ table passion of jealousy, and so serve him,  
 “ and her, by disobeying her, in the article  
 “ of secrecy, more than I should by comply-  
 “ ing with her directions---but then this du-  
 “ elling, which custom has imposed upon e-  
 “ very man, who would live with reputation  
 “ and honour in the world :--How must I  
 “ preserve myself from imputations there?  
 “ He'll, forsooth, call it, or think it fear, if

" I explain without fighting---But his letter---

" I'll read it again-----

Sir,

*You have used me basely, in corresponding, and carrying on a treaty, where you told me you were indifferent. I have changed my sword since I saw you; which advertisement I thought proper to send you against the next meeting, between you and the injur'd*

CHARLES MYRTLE.

*Enter Tom.*

Tom.

" Mr. Myrtle, fir, would your honour please  
" to see him?

Bevil.

" Why you stupid creature ! let mr. Myr-  
" tle wait at my lodgings!--- shew him up.  
" (*exit Tom*) well ! I am resolved upon my  
" carriage to him--he is in love, and in every  
" circumstance of life a little distrustful,  
" which I must allow for----but here he is.

*Enter Tom introducing Myrtle.*

" Sir, I am extremely oblig'd to you for  
" this honour; --- but, fir, you with your  
" very discerning face, leave the room. (*Exit*  
" *Tom.*) Well ! mr. Myrtle, your commands  
" with me?

Myrtle.

" The time, the place, our long acquaint-  
" tance, and many other circumstances,  
" which affect me on this occasion, oblige  
" me

“ me, without farther ceremony, or conference, to desire you would not only, as you already have, acknowledge the receipt of my letter, but also comply with the request of it. I must have farther notice taken of my message, than these half-lines,—  
“ I have your’s,—I shall be at home.—

Bevil.

“ Sir, I own, I have receiv’d a letter from you, in a very unusual style; but as I design every thing, in this matter, shall be your own action, your own seeking, I shall understand nothing, but what you are pleased to confirm, face to face, and I have already forgot the contents of your epistle.

Myrtle.

“ This cool manner is very agreeable to the abuse you have already made of my simplicity and frankness; and I see your moderation tends to your own advantage, not mine; to your own safety, not consideration of your friend.

Bevil.

“ My own safety, mr. Myrtle?

Myrtle.

“ Your own safety, mr. Bevil.

Bevil.

“ Look you, mr. Myrtle, there’s no disguising that I understand what you would be at.—But, sir, you know, I have often dar’d to disapprove of the decisions a tyrant

“ rant custom has introduc’d, to the breach  
 “ of all laws, divine and human.

Myrtle.

“ Mr. Bevil, mr. Bevil, it would be a  
 “ good first principle, in those who have so  
 “ tender a conscience that way, to have as  
 “ much abhorrence of doing injuries, as---

Bevil.

“ As what?

Myrtle.

“ As fear of answering for them!

Bevil.

“ As fear of answering for them! But that  
 “ apprehension is just or blameable, accord-  
 “ ing to the object of that fear.---I have of-  
 “ ten told you in confidence of heart, I ab-  
 “ horred the daring to offend the Author of  
 “ life, and rushing into his presence.---I say,  
 “ by the same act, to commit the crime a-  
 “ gainst him, and immediately to urge on to  
 “ his tribunal.

Myrtle.

“ Mr. Bevil, I must tell you, this cool-  
 “ ness, this gravity, this shew of conscience,  
 “ shall never cheat me of my mistress. You  
 “ have, indeed, the best excuse for life, the  
 “ hopes of possessing Lucinda; but consider,  
 “ sir, I have as much reason to be weary of  
 “ it, if I am to lose her; and my first at-  
 “ tempt to recover her, shall be to let her  
 “ see the dauntless man, who is to be her  
 “ guardian and protector.

Be-

Bevil.

“ Sir, shew me but the least glimpse of  
“ argument, that I am authorised, by my  
“ own hand, to vindicate any lawless insult  
“ of this nature, and I will shew thee --- to  
“ chastise thee, hardly deserves the name of  
“ courage --- slight, inconsiderate man ! ---  
“ There is, mr. Myrtle, no such terror in  
“ quick anger ; and you shall, you know  
“ not why, be cool, as you have, you know  
“ not why been warm.

Myrtle.

“ Is the woman one loves, so little an oc-  
“ casion of anger ? You perhaps, who know  
“ not what it is to love, who have your rea-  
“ dy, your commodious, your foreign trin-  
“ ket, for your loose hours, and from your  
“ fortune, your specious outward carriage,  
“ and other lucky circumstances, as easy a  
“ way to the possession of a woman of ho-  
“ nour ; you know nothing of what it is to  
“ be allarmed, to be distracted, with anxie-  
“ ty, and terror of losing more than life :  
“ your marriage, happy man ! goes on like  
“ common business ; and in the interim, you  
“ have your rambling captive, your Indian  
“ princess, for your soft moments of dalli-  
“ ance, your convenient, your ready In-  
“ diana.

Bevil.

“ You have touch'd me beyond the pa-  
“ tience of a man ; and I am excusable in  
“ the guard of innocence (or from the in-  
“ firmity

" firmity of human nature, which can bear  
 " no more) to accept your invitation, and  
 " observe your letter--- Sir, I'll attend you.

*Enter Tom.*

Tom.

" Did you call, fir, I thought you did :  
 " I heard you speak aloud ?

Bevil.

" Yes, go call a Coach.

Tom.

" Sir,---master,---mr. Myrtle,---friends,---  
 " gentlemen, what do you mean ? I am but  
 " a servant, or---

Bevil.

" Call a Coach.

*(A long pause, walking suddenly by each other,  
 Exit Tom.) (Aside.)* " Shall I (though  
 " provoked to the uttermost) recover myself  
 " at the entrance of a third person, and that  
 " my servant too, and not have respect e-  
 " nough to all I have ever been receiving  
 " from my infancy, the obligation to the best  
 " of fathers, an unhappy virgin too, whose  
 " life depends on mine.

*(Shutting the door.*

" *(To Myrtle.)* I have, thank heaven, had  
 " time to recollect myself, and shall not for  
 " fear, of what such a rash man as you think  
 " of me, keep longer unexplain'd the false  
 " appearances, under which your infirmity  
 " of temper makes you suffer ; when, per-  
 " haps, too much regard to a false point of  
 " honour, makes me prolong that suffering.

Myrtle.

Myrtle.

" I am sure, mr. Bevil cannot doubt, but  
 " I had rather have satisfaction from his inno-  
 " cence, than from his sword.

Bevil.

" Why then would you ask it first that  
 way?

Myrtle.

" Consider, you kept your temper, your-  
 " self no longer, than 'till I spoke to the dis-  
 " advantage of her you lov'd.

Bevil.

" True. But let me tell you, I have saved  
 " you from the most exquisite distress, even  
 " though you had succeeded in the dispute :  
 " I know you so well, that I am sure, to have  
 " found t his letter about a man you had killed,  
 " would have been worse than death to your-  
 " self----read it (*aside*) when he is thoroughly  
 " mortified, and shame has got the better of  
 " jealousy, when he has seen himself tho-  
 " roughly, he will deserve to be assisted to-  
 " wards obtaining Lucinda.

Myrtle.

" With what a superiority has he turn'd  
 " that injury on me, as the aggressor ? I begin  
 " to fear I have been too far transported---A  
 " *treaty in our family* ! is not that too much ?--  
 " I shall relapse--but I find (in the postscript,  
 " *something like jealousy*----with what face can  
 " I see my benefactor ? My advocate ? whom  
 " I have treated like a betrayer,---O ! Bevil,  
 " with what words shall I----

Bevil.

Bevil.

" There needs none ; to convince, is much  
" more than to conquer.

Myrtle.

" But can you---

Bevil.

" You have overpaid the inquietude you  
" gave me, in the change I see in you to-  
" wards me. Alas ! what machines are we !  
" Thy face is altered to that of another man ;  
" to that of my companion, my friend.

Myrtle.

" That I could be such a precipitant wretch !

Bevil.

" Pray no more.

Myrtle.

" Let me reflect how many friends have  
" died, by the hands of friends, for want of  
" temper ; and you must give me leave to say  
" again, and again, how much I am beholden  
" to that superior spirit you have subdu'd me  
" with---what had become of one of us, or  
" perhaps both, had you been as weak as I  
" was, and as incapable of reason ?

Bevil.

" I congratulate to us both the escape from  
" ourselves, and hope the memory of it will  
" make us dearer friends than ever.

Myrtle.

" Dear Bevil, 'your friendly conduct has  
" convinc'd me that there is nothing manly,  
" but what is conducted by reason, and agreea-  
" ble to the practice of virtue and justice.

" And

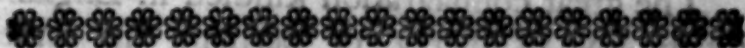
" And yet, how many have been sacrific'd  
 " to that idol, the unreasonable opinion of  
 " men ! nay, they are so ridiculous in it, that  
 " they often use their swords against each o-  
 " ther, with dissembled anger, and real fear.  
 " Betray'd by honour, and compell'd by  
 " shame,

" They hazard being, to preserve a name;  
 " Nor dare inquire into the dread mistake,  
 " 'Till plung'd in sad eternity they wake.

This scene is, if I mistake not, an excel-  
 lent lesson not only for friends, but for all man-  
 kind in general; as the strongest and most un-  
 reasonable of all prejudices is attack'd by it.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.



## LETTER XLV.

To the Duke of NIVERNONIS;

*Of the diversity of opinions in England concern-  
 ing publick affairs; and the sum of the de-  
 bates in the house of commons on the army.*

STAMFORD, &c.

MY LORD DUKE,

**I** Find by the honour of your letter, that you  
 are as well acquainted with Tacitus, as  
 with Horace; and that though mr. ADDISON  
 and

and mr. POPE divert you, you had rather converse with my lord chancellor CLARENDON and bishop BURNET. You know the English almost as well as if you had liv'd among them.

Since you have mentioned politicks to me, I'll go into your strain, for fear of drawing some reproaches on me, if I don't; because I plainly perceive 'tis the lesson you have set me. The odious names of Whig and Tory, which you mention in your letter, and which made so much noise in the reign of queen ANN, are now almost intirely forgot in England; but the same parties still subsist, under different denominations. *Corruption* and *opposition*, are the two terms at present made use of, to distinguish those who are for or against the ministry.

The great conflagration kindled in England by the love of liberty, or perhaps, the independent spirit; is not yet quite extinguish'd: there still remains a fire conceal'd under the ashes, and the sparks which fly from it, from time to time, are sufficient to kindle such like conflagrations.

Party spirit is so common in England, that you can hardly discover what is the real one of the nation. Who would not think that the acts of the parliament which represents it, were by the consent of the whole; and yet, if you'll believe the publick clamour; they are only the work of a corrupt majority, who sacrifice their country to the selfish views of the minister.

'Tis

'Tis surprising to find here, such a contrariety of opinions, in the most essential things; and which most nearly concern the interests of the people. Some look on those measures, as incompatible with liberty, which others maintain are necessary for the preservation of the laws, and government. And thus I saw the nation, last winter, divided in their sentiments concerning the act of Parliament, which grants the king the continuance of the *sixteen Thousand* land forces, which he has actually on foot.

I was in the house of commons, on the day appointed to debate this great question, which has been already so often debated there. Every body at London, knew how it would be carried; and whatever the power and liberty of this venerable assembly may be, 'tis almost always the same with regard to the most important points; they are determin'd in private, before ever they come to be publicly debated. Those who speak with the greatest warmth against an act, know very well, they shall not be able to prevent its passing: yet nevertheless, they either do their duty, or gratify their passions; and comfort themselves, for the usefulness of their endeavours, with the honour they gain by opposing; or the pleasure they feel, in making use of the liberty they have, to say what they please.

The member, who first declared his opinion, for continuing the troops on foot; seem'd to me, to support his advice with very good reasons. "He maintain'd that,

Vol. I.

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“ the spirit of discontent and sedition was never more common in England, than at present ; and would certainly raise a rebellion, if it was not kept under, by an army always ready, either to prevent the malady, or stifle it in its birth. He added ; that considering the continual endeavours of different parties to alienate the affections of the subjects from their sovereign, and inspire the nation with a hatred for the present government, and contempt for the parliament itself, it was impossible, without the assistance of an army, to make the laws respected, and those who were the support of them : that of late years, acts of parliament, whose sole aim, was the general good of the nation, had met with the strongest opposition from the people ; and that had it not been for the troops, turbulent and factious spirits would have taken advantage of these troubles, to plunge the nation into greater disorders ; from whence it is easy to conclude, that the disbanding, or what was pretty near the same thing, the weakening of the army, was the sure way to abandon England to the fury of civil wars.

“ They use their utmost endeavours, continued he, to render the designs of the government suspected ; they pretend that an army in time of peace, threatens our liberty : but instead of suffering ourselves to be frightened with imaginary fears, let us examine, said he ; whether it has really done it the least prejudice.

“ prejudice. So long as the laws are religious-  
“ ly observ’d, the clergy enjoy their rights,  
“ the dissenters are protected, and every pri-  
“ vate man’s property is secure; an English-  
“ man who has both his fortune and consci-  
“ ence at his own command, has nothing to  
“ apprehend from an army, whose sole view  
“ is to make the laws respected, and preserve  
“ the tranquility of the government.

He had hardly finished his discourse, when a man, who was close by me, and seem’d to have listened with impatience, said loud enough for me to hear him, and in a blunt and angry tone; ’Tis not three years, since this same member thought and spoke very differently. He was not so easy with regard to liberty, and did not look on the army with so favourable an eye, before the court had blinded him with a pension. And all those, added this angry Englishman, who speak in the same language, are determined by the same motives. Some are paid for speaking, and others for being silent. He had carried his satire farther, had not one of the opposite party, rose up to answer the first. He is reputed a truly eloquent man, and I am sorry I am not able to give you his discourse, with all the energy it seem’d to flow from him. This is, however, the summary of his reasons.

“ I can’t, said he, think a people free, who  
“ concur in maintaining an army, without the  
“ least necessity. Were we not totally dege-  
“ nerated from the virtue of our ancestors, in-

“stead of examining whether we should di-  
 “minish the army, or keep it on the same  
 “footing; it would be unanimously disbanded.  
 “What need have we of it? We are in peace  
 “with all Europe. \* An army in time of  
 “peace, is contrary to the constitution of this  
 “country; liberty and an arm’d force, are  
 “things incompatible in their natures. The  
 “Athenians, a wise people, and jealous of  
 “their liberty; lost it, by granting Pisistratus  
 “only forty guards, for the security of his  
 “person. The continuance of CÆSAR’s com-  
 “mission in the Gauls, inabl’d him to destroy  
 “the most powerful, and best establish’d re-  
 “publick in the world. Without having re-  
 “course to foreign examples, ’tis not a cen-  
 “tury since in London itself, an army rais’d  
 “by the parliament, enslav’d it. In the course  
 “of a few years, that formidable body intro-  
 “duc’d ten different forms of government, all  
 “equally contrary to the genius of the nation,  
 “and even to the opinion of the greatest part  
 “of CROMWELL’s followers. A general has  
 “such power over an army; that although the  
 “sentiments of those ’tis compos’d of, differ  
 “from his, he can oblige them to act me-  
 “chanically, according to his own views.  
 “Thus the Greeks themselves, contrary to  
 “their wills, subverted the liberty of Greece.  
 “And thus the Romans, contrary to their  
 “intention, subverted the Roman republick,  
 “and made themselves slaves to one man. In  
 “fine, thus Englishmen armed for the defence  
 of

\* In 1737.

“ of the laws and liberty, tyraniz’d in the  
“ most odious manner, over their country-  
“ men. If Great Britain is ever to bear a fo-  
“ reign you ; her own inhabitants, like those  
“ of Rome, must pave the way by bind-  
“ ing her in chains of iron. Thus every  
“ zealous Englishman has reason to be al-  
“ larm’d at the numerous troops we keep on  
“ foot, without the least necessity. ’Tis in  
“ vain to say, that as the army are paid by the  
“ publick, they properly speaking, depend on  
“ the people ; was not the army in 1641,  
“ which enslav’d the nation, paid by the same ?  
“ Were not all the armies, in every country  
“ whatever, that have enslav’d their country-  
“ men, paid by the publick ? The Romans  
“ payed the very army, that assisted CÆSAR  
“ to inflave them : an army, commonly de-  
“ pends less on those that pay them, than on  
“ him who names their generals ; they know  
“ nobody but their commander ; and at his  
“ command, will spread fire and desolation  
“ through their country, and point their dag-  
“ gers at the breasts of their own parents.

“ Besides, is it reasonable to expect soldiers  
“ will be more virtuous now, than the Ro-  
“ mans, or our own ancestors were ? We  
“ don’t pretend, I think, that the present ge-  
“ neration are animated with a greater zeal  
“ for the public welfare, than the Romans  
“ were in CÆSAR’s time, or our own coun-  
“ trymen, in the middle of the last century.  
“ Let us run over our annals ; shall we find an

“ age when corruption was more general the  
 “ great so sway’d by private interest, and  
 “ the common people so much addicted to  
 “ all sorts of vice? Not to fear an army in  
 “ these critical times, is the strongest proof of  
 “ our insensibility of every thing, that threatens  
 “ our liberty. To maintain an army, in the  
 “ present circumstances of affairs, is forging  
 “ chains for ourselves.”

During this harangue, I looked every now and then at the honest Englishman, who had been so much offended at the former speech; and imagined this would please him. So, as soon as it was finish’d, I complimented him on the satisfaction, so strenuous a champion for his country, must give him. ’Tis very true, said he, we have heard a man, who speaks well; but what a misfortune is it, that we can say nothing more in his praise, and can’t rely on his manner of thinking! And immediately resuming his angry air and blunt tone; yes, sir, continued he, if this same orator, that we now admire; were admitted to morrow into the ministry, he would do just like those, against whom he has spoke with so much vehemence.\* And unfortunately, almost all those who seem most intent on the public welfare, in reality, regard nothing but their private interest; thus while some support all the measures of the government, because they are bought by places, employments, or pen-

\* *At odit eos qui subitâ & magnâ potentiâ insolenter utuntur, idem faciet, cum idem poterit.* SENECA, Lib. 6. of his epistles.

pensions; others only oppose the court, because they have not yet been offered any thing, capable of satisfying their avarice or ambition. One is only so zealous for the public good, because they would not make him a peer; another only rails so violently against the king's privy-council, because they would not make him secretary of state. *O venal city, cry'd JUGURTHA, when he left Rome, that would soon be sold, if there were but a purchaser.* We but too much deserve this reproach; and indeed we have already had it, when a minister speaking of this very house of commons, said; *that he could have all the votes, if he would; but that he contented himself with buying only as many as were necessary, to make him master of it.* The venality of votes caus'd the ruin of the Roman republic; the senseless people, sold ambitious citizens a power to oppress them: I don't know what we shall be hereafter, but 'tis certain, we are not what we have been. We have none of that ancient spirit left, which was so many years the *palladium* of our liberty. If this zealous man had been impower'd to harangue the assembly, we should have had a *philippick* immediately.

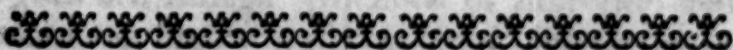
As to myself, I can't think that things are quite so bad, as the discontented are pleas'd to represent them; but then I am certain, that they are very different from what most of the English would perswade us. As the one exaggerate too much, the dangers that menace their liberty; the others are not careful

enough, to preserve the pretious depositum in all it's purity.

I have the honour to be,

My lord duke,

Your most humble, &c.



# L E T T E R   XLVI.

To the Chevalier D E B \* \*.

*Of the violent passion the English of both sexes have for hunting.*

STAMFORD, &c.

S I R,

**T** H I S not uneasiness that makes me go a hunting; that often goes along with those, who have no other means of avoiding it. I love the exercise of riding; and find that Plato and Pliny were much in the right, to recommend it as salutary. Most of our inclinations spring from our exigences I own, that without having a passion for hunting, the sound of the horn, makes me willingly renounce the silence of my closet. Besides, those who have so well acquainted you with my way of life; make no doubt, but that during the chase, I am as much taken up with the hunters, as with the stag they pursue. If, as you say, I play the fool, with fools; 'tis because I can't be admitted amongst them, on other terms; and

and nothing, I think, makes us know the value of wisdom better, than seeing the folly of others.

I live here, with people, whose chief pleasure is hunting; and in a nation, where every body loves it. The clergyman, the lawyer, the person they call here, *justice of the peace*, the common farmer, rich or poor; in a word, all the English, of what rank soever, leave every thing for hunting. I have seen more than once, grey-headed clergymen ride with as much eagerness, as young people of twenty. Love is the passion of youth; avarice of old age; but here, hunting seems to be the passion of all ages. I frequently see a certain baronet, whose favourite pleasure it has always been, and is still; he is a hero of his kind; and who, though cover'd with glory, daily braves the danger. He relates the hurts he has receiv'd, by several unhappy falls; shews every moment his noble scars, and is as vain of the consequences of his folly; as if those wounds were proofs of his courage, and he had receiv'd them in the service of his country. How many men, in truth, owe all their happiness and merit to nothing but their folly! But who would imagine, that hunting, could be the greatest pleasure of a philosopher; and he a blind one? Yet, so it is of the famous SANDERSON, professor of the mathematics at Cambridge; whose misfortune to have lost his sight, neither hinders his giving lessons on optics, nor hunting the fox. His horse is used  
to

to follow his servants ; and 'tis not the exercise only that he loves : the noise of the dogs and huntsmen transports him ; and he makes as much himself, as all the rest of the company. MONTAGNE speaks of a man born blind, who had the same passion for hunting ; *there, says he, is a hare catch'd ; and he is as proud of the taking her, as he hears others say, they are.* We owe all our happiness to our fancy ; and how happy is the man, who has one, so cheaply gratify'd !

I call to mind a joke that I have read somewhere in mr. ADDISON. To ridicule the Scots, who arm'd, in the late king's reign, in favour of the pretender, he says, that a fox happen'd one day to cross their camp ; and immediately the whole army, officers and soldiers, pursued it, and 'twas not in the power of their chiefs to stop them.

Though all the terms of hunting in the English language, are borrow'd from the French ; yet it cannot be said, the Normans inspir'd them with this taste : 'tis innate, as the severe laws, with regard to hunting, made immediately after the conquest, sufficiently prove. The penalty of them, is not so much proportioned, to the heinousness of the offence ; as to the strong desire, particular persons had to break them. However, I think the sentence of one of their authors, who pretends this passion in his countrymen, *proves their affinity with the savages of America*, is too severe. As violent as the exercise of hunting is,  
the

the women in England, seem to like it as well as the men. Every nation has its particular customs and defects. They blame us, and not without reason, for having carried luxury to excess, in France. With us, even in the country, a woman of quality passes the morning in bed, and the afternoon upon a sofa, or at a card table. Women of quality here, lead quite a different life; those who are reasonable, employ themselves in enquiring into their household-affairs; and others give themselves, perhaps too much, to hunting. Many English women pique themselves on riding, as well as men; and leaping a ditch, as boldly as a huntsman.

A woman, one day, being desirous to make a conquest of a courtier, who was extremely fond of hunting; risk'd the breaking of her neck, to have the happiness to please him. She leap'd a gate, that stop'd the boldest hunters; her courage was admir'd, and produc'd an effect, on the heart of the man she desired to gain; which, perhaps, all her charms could not have done. HERCULES was obliged to spin, to please OMPHALE; and women must hunt, to gain the hearts of some Englishmen. JUVENAL tells us, that the Romans, in his time, were so passionately fond of prize-fighting; that the ladies themselves made it a point of honour, to be excellent at it; and exercised themselves in the amphitheatre, by fighting one against another, or against wild beasts. In all probability, they shew'd their address and intrepidity

intrepidity, from the same motive. A desire to please, is the first mover, of almost all the actions of the female sex.

We have seen one of the greatest beauties in England, the dutchess of Q\*\*\*, go to the academy, like a young page, to learn to ride. We have in our neighbourhood a lady, who is one of the greatest fox-hunters in England; she hunts the hounds herself, and he must be a bold sportsman that follows her.

Our women, who are so fond of perfumes, don't much resemble those of this country, who love to breath the air of a stable. Many here, go and feed their horses themselves, and, if I may say so, drink their tea with them. They pretend that some of them, even finish their dressing in the stable; but in this, I believe they are falsely accused, for a keen huntress is very soon dress'd.

HOMER tells us, ANDROMACHE took such care of HECTOR's horses; that she gave them meat and drink, oft'ner than she did him. Many English, without giving these domestick animals that preference, glory in loving them. One frequently finds in the country, women who talk of nothing but horses and hunting, and who understand a good hunter, as well as the best jockey.

Without prejudice; will you not grant, that women talk with a better grace, of caps and ribbons, the play and opera; than of saddles and horses, of buck and fox-hunting? Whether a man be English or French, if he is rational,

tional, he will not like to see, either an effeminate man, or a masculine woman. A woman at the head of a pack of hounds, is as ridiculous as a man at his toilet. She who has not the timidity of her sex, more frequently exchanges it for a vice, than a virtue. A French fop, who gives a learned dissertation, upon adjusting a ribbon on a cap; is very contemptible: an English woman, who descants on the manner of forcing a fox, is a woman fit only for hunters. Both sexes are equally concern'd to disclaim, both men that are women, and women that are men; they are both unnatural: and indeed, nothing but unform'd beings, who have such a mixture of contrary qualities, as makes their natures undistinguishable.

It is not surprising that people of fortune in England, should be so much addicted to an exercise, that is one of the greatest amusements in the country; they spend half their lives there. London is the rendezvous of all the nobility of the kingdom; there are great riches and plenty there, but very little pleasure; whether it be, that the political affairs they are employ'd in, are contrary to it, or that the sea-coal smoak and fogs of the Thames, dispose their minds otherwise. Most of the nobility only come to town to sit in parliament, and leave it as soon as the session is finished, which always lasts longer than they desire. What could they do in the country if they did not hunt? The company of those who come to visit them, is not  
very

very entertaining. The country people in England, to say nothing more, are very clownish and unpolished; and the clergy in the country, are not much more agreeable company. These honest gentlemen are never easy but in each others company, and commonly, had rather smoak at the steward's table, than dine at the master's. What can they do better with people, whose company is troublesome to them, than take them a hunting?

Those who are not hunters, are surpris'd at the violent passion, so many people have for this exercise; because they don't know the principle, from whence it arises. We must not reflect too much on the nature of our pleasures; there are but too many of them, that give us cause to be ashamed of ourselves. And why do we find so much, in running after a miserable animal, if it was not from the necessity of flying from ourselves? We don't seek for the animal, we fly from ourselves. Our faculties both of body and mind, become our enemies, if we leave them inactive; the one fall into a lethargy, for want of exercise; the other languishes for want of motion. Gaming, in which so many people spend their time, is a proof, that men cannot live perfectly idle. 'Tis the diversion of those, who know how to employ themselves; the business of those, who have nothing to do: generally speaking, it gives more pain than pleasure, and leaves no satisfaction after it; yet, with what eagerness do both sexes give themselves up to it, particularly

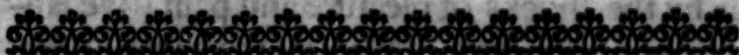
ly amongst the quality? We are all of such a nature, that we are not sensible of our existence but by the shocks of pleasure and pain; we languish in tranquility. Man is like a ship at sea, which has as much to fear, from the total inaction of a calm, as from the most violent agitation of the waves.

I cannot better conclude a letter, in which I have made so much mention of hunting, than with an adventure, which I was lately witness to. We were hunting a stag, and fifty farmers follow'd the chase. I perceiv'd at the head of them, a man, whose odd dress struck me; he was cloath'd in leather, and had a bag hung at one of his sides, and a horn at the other: he was a cross-post-boy, who goes to fetch the letters from the little towns, and carry them to those, through which the great-post passes. This lout, more intent upon his pleasure, than his business, and unconcern'd about the consequence of the letters he carried; followed the chase very quietly, and was in at the death. Therefore, if this letter should not come duly to hand, impute it to the post-boy's having met some hunters in his road.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

L E T-



## LETTER XLVII.

To Monsieur DE BUFFONS;

*Of the want of taste in the English and French gardens.*

STAMFORD, &amp;c.

SIR,

THE English are not satisfy'd to succeed better than we do, in useful things; they dispute with us even the frivolous advantage we can pretend to, of understanding those which depend upon taste, better than they do. I acknowledge their superiority in orchards, and kitchen gardens; but in pleasure gardens, I think they are much inferior to us. LE NAUTRE understood the best of any man in Europe, how to dispose those places, which are design'd only for the imbelishment of a house, and the pleasure of those who live in it; the Thuilleries are in their kind, what St. PETER's at Rome is, in its kind: they are admir'd by all who are capable of knowing their merit. 'Tis true, the finical air and studied plans of our parterres, give no manner of pleasure to those, who love beau-

beautiful and simple nature ; but then, the immensely large bowling-greens of this country, run into the contrary extreme ; they are too naked and too uniform : nature must be diversify'd, to please ; for as somebody has remark'd, *tiresomness is the daughter of uniformity*. An extensive meadow, strikes you in a very agreeable manner, at first sight ; but if it is not terminated by some rising ground, and divided by a rivulet and some trees ; you soon grow weary, of what you at first so much admir'd.

I am sorry not to find in our gardens, those thick groves of ever-greens, that equally defend from the scorching heat and pinching cold ; and which in the middle of winter, remind us at least of the charms of the spring. Since luxury has introduc'd among us, the fashion to have summer and winter appartments ; I am surpris'd that we don't, in imitation of the English, make us also gardens for both seasons. These groves of trees, that never shed their leaves, are agreeable walks for the fine days in the winter.

On the other hand, there's nothing displeases me so much, as those eternal yew-trees, which are the principal ornament of the gardens, in this country. It is not sufficient to have them in the common pyramidal, round or square forms, which were formerly as fashionable in France, as they are at present in England. The English gardeners in this respect, are much greater artists than ours are ; they cut all sorts of trees,

into the most monstrous and ridiculous shapes. They'll cut a holy-oak into an elephant, with a tower on his back ; they'll represent a fox, with hounds running after him, in box ; and at other-times cut a yew, into a formidable giant. They love to make a statue out of a tree, and may justly boast of being the first sculptors in England.

This bad taste, prevail'd formerly all over Europe ; and we see, even at this time, in the gardens of Alcanfar, or the Moor's palace, at Seville ; several statues form'd out of very high myrtle-trees, representing musicians, with their instruments in their hands.

'Tis in vain for people, who aim at true beauty in every thing, that is to say, nature, to make gardens, for patterns of simplicity and beauty : nothing can change the taste of a citizen, who is as stupid as rich ; or of a country-squire, who is still commonly more unpolish'd. They dislike simplicity ; a tree, whose head is not exactly spherical, is too common to be plac'd in their garden ; but a yew-tree cut by the rule and compass, and crown'd with a bird, coarsely sketch'd out, charms them, because it surprises them. They prefer these trifling works of art, to all the wonders of nature.

An author of this nation, to ridicule this childish and ridiculous taste of his countrymen, says ; he knows a gardner who has carry'd this art to such perfection, that he can represent a whole family, man, woman and children,

children, in the most natural manner: and that this ingenious artist has at present, a series of ever-green trees and shrubs to sell, which are cut with a truth and perfection, that nobody before him ever attain'd to. He gives the following catalogue of them:

" ADAM and EVE in yew. ADAM a little dammaged, by the *tree of knowledge* falling upon him, in a great tempest. EVE and the *Serpent* in a very good condition.

" The *tower of Babel*, not yet finish'd.

" *Saint GEORGE* in box. His arm hardly long enough, but will be in a condition to run the dragon through, next *April*.

" A *dragon* in the same; with an ivy tail for the present. N. B. These two pieces are to be sold together.

" EDWARD the black prince, in Cypress.

" A series of busts, of all the dukes of Normandy that have been kings of England, in box; from the originals in the same wood, that are now to be seen in the gardens of St. STEPHEN'S abby, at Caën, in Normandy. That of WILLIAM the Conqueror, is extremely fine.

" A bear in wild bay, now in flower; with a *buntingsman* in juniper, with fruit on it.

" A couple of dammag'd giants, very cheap.

" A queen ELIZABETH in philyrea, a little inclining to the green sickness, but in full growth.

“ Another queen ELIZABETH, which was  
 “ very forward, but has since suffered, by  
 “ being too near another shrub:

“ *A BEN JOHNSON*,\* of exquisite beauty,  
 “ in laurel.

“ Several eminent modern poets, in bay-  
 “ tree; a little dammag’d, and will be sold  
 “ for a penny a piece;

“ *A hog* growing, chang’d into a *Porcupine*,  
 “ by being forgot for a week in a dry season.

“ *A hog* in lavender, with sage growing in  
 “ his belly.

“ *Noah’s-ark* resting on the mountain, in  
 “ Holly; the sides have suffer’d a little  
 “ damage for want of water.

You see, sir, by this sort of satire; that here, more even than in France; instead of imitating nature, and adorning their gardens with her greatest beauties: they make use of art to disfigure them. They have a greater regard for the whimsical fancies of the latter, than for the plain beauties of the former. In all sorts of things, the majority of mankind prefer the *extraordinary* to the *beautiful*. However, ’tis a simple and natural air, in the works of art, as well as those of the understanding, that makes them of the taste of all nations, and all times. Thus St. James’s-park, which at first sight, seems to have nothing very extraordinary; yet nevertheless, by this sort of simplicity, pleases you the more, every time you see it. And thus, the rural and solitary air of the  
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\* An English poet, cotemporary and rival of the famous SHAKESPEAR.

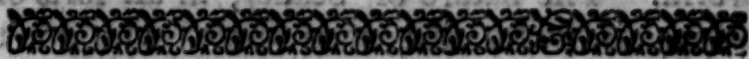
Luxembourg gardens, equally pleases all the world. The nature of beauty, in all sorts of things, is such; that even those, who don't know the principles of it; feel its effects.

The English set a great value on their verdure, as they have reason to do; they spare no expence, to keep those magnificent bowling-greens in fine order, that make their gardens so agreeable: and of which, those of the *Palais-Royal*, will give you an idea, both with regard to the expence and the effect. But why must we run to an excess in every thing? Because the turf is fine in England, they turn every thing into turf. Thus, for the sake of a more extensive verdure, before their houses; they plant their shady walks and copses at so great a distance; that you can't go to enjoy the shade of them, in the summer; without being expos'd to be scorch'd by the sun. On the contrary, verdure is what is most wanted in many French gardens. That profusion of sand and box, artfully twin'd about, which covers our parterres, is in a low style; and presents to the eye a most tiresome regularity. One would take them for designs of cut-paper work; as here in England, a square divided into knots, and planted with yew-trees cut into all sorts of forms, is not much unlike a chess-board, with its pieces on it. As this gives most of the English gardens, a *Gothick* air; I am afraid many of our parterres, are in a trifling taste, which we are justly charg'd with in many things. I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

B b 3

L E T-



## LETTER XLVIII.

To Abbé L \* \* C \* \*

*Of the animosity the sectaries in England bear to the establish'd church; story of two disputants at a tavern, &c.*

YORK, &amp;c.

SIR,

**I** Think the tranquility, in which some authors boast the several sects, who have establish'd themselves in England, since the misfortune of her separation from the catholic church, live at this time; is without foundation. The wise authority of parliament can hardly keep them within bounds. The gospel preaches nothing but peace and charity; yet those, who call themselves its ministers, breath nothing but discord and sedition.

England will always have reason to fear, the two parties of high and low-church; the first is the predominant, but the other still powerful enough, to raise its head in troublesome times. A small alteration in the political government, might produce a total revolution in the ecclesiastical.

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But 'tis in Scotland, particularly, that the hot *Presbyterians* endeavour, to rekindle the flame of civil war, and make their famous and formidable *solemn league and covenant*, triumph by the sword. These pretended evangelical preachers, are still animated with the spirit of their famous KNOX; who establish'd his reformation in Scotland, by fire and sword. Proud, with their humility, and insolent, with their meekness; they despise all authority; their sermons, are satyres; and their prayers, curses. Where ever this doctrine, enemy to all subordination, has taken root; rebellion and civil wars have been the fruits of it. The seeds of it were sown in England, in the time of queen ELIZABETH; the poisonous fruits they produc'd, could not ripen 'till the reign of CHARLES I: when they equally dishonour'd, both the English nation and the Protestant religion. The English now revere that prince, as a martyr, whom they executed on a scaffold, like a criminal.

Some days since, these fanatics assembled an infinite number of the populace in a plain near Edinburg, founded their seditious allarm, and endeavour'd to convert their audience into a rebellious army: but the vigilant and active magistrates happily extinguish'd the fire, these zealous incendiaries were going to kindle.

The only reason why the nonconformists in England, hate those of the episcopal church so much, is on account of the honours and rich benefices they enjoy. Those who are not

of the establish'd church, look on the protection, which is due to those that are, as a conspiracy against their own ; and that party which is only tolerated, would grant no toleration itself. It complains of the persecution of its enemies, and persecutes first, itself. It implores the authority of the laws against them, which it affronts, to make war upon them. The sermons of the different parties, in the mean time, are commonly a sort of hostilities which they commit against each other ; and treat much more of controversy than morality. BURNET says, speaking of the Scotch puritans ; *That they esteem'd morality very little, and did not study it much.* What the consequence of all these disputes is, which tend more to inspire mens hearts, with sentiments contrary to christian charity, than enlighten their understandings with the light of the gospel ; do you, sir, judge, by the following fact, which I have found recorded by a writer of the last age.

Two honest Englishmen, one a devout and constant hearer of a preacher of the establish'd church, and the other a zealous attendant at the meetings of a presbyterian teacher, met one morning at a coffee-house ; and appointed to meet at a tavern the next day, to discourse on some points of doctrine, which those two ministers had preach'd on the Sunday before. With a greater inclination for the place, than the subjects they were to debate there ; they met exactly at the time appointed. A bottle  
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of French wine was brought, and one of them propos'd *Predestination*. After several bumpers, the dispute grew warm; and the texts of scripture, and quotations from the fathers made such a noise; that two lewd women, who are but too frequently found in the taverns at London, brought thither by the uproar, resolv'd to enter the room, and put an end to it at once. They took them, as the author of this history says, for two rabbies, who could not agree about some passage in the old testament.

At the sight of these miserable wretches, the heat of the dispute immediately subsided; our doctors chang'd the conversation with them, and libertinism succeeded to controversy. Such is the effect of wine, it disposes people to all sorts of vice, and then objects need not be very tempting to become dangerous. The girls were soon sent away, and our worthy disputants resum'd the bottle and predestination. The quarrel became greater than ever, and their animosity increased, in proportion, as the fumes of the wine flew into their heads. At last they were quite drunk, and disputed, 'till they drew their swords to end the controversy; and if the disturbance had not happily brought somebody into the room, in all probability, predestination had brought them both to a tragical end. The same wine that made them quarrel, reconcil'd them; they parted good friends, and one shaking t'other by the hand, said; *Indeed, my dear friend, I am very sorry, you will not go to heaven the same road that I do.*

Without

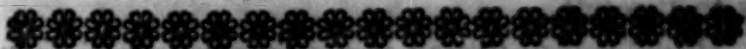
Without doubt, sir, if the preachers, instead of entering into these theological disputes, had preach'd that day against libertinism and drunkenness; the gentlemen would have been equally good christians, and not have given that scandal. But I am not afraid to say it to you, sir, who apply yourself to preaching, with all the talents that are requisite to become useful to religion, and who know too well the duties of a christian preacher, not to discharge them worthily: that in all countries whatever, most preachers are more intent on gratifying their indiscreet zeal, or making profelytes, than forming manners and correcting vice. Converting of souls, is the least part of their employment in the pulpit, or rather, they are wholly employed there, about themselves. How many of them treat upon questions there, above the capacity of their audience, and sometimes even above their own?

I remember to have heard a parson of a village, in France, equally stupid and ignorant; preach before his parishoners, most of which knew not how to read; against those that spend their time, in examining, whether the sun moves round the earth, or the earth turns round upon its own axis. When sheep are intrusted with shepherds, so incapable of conducting of them, is it surprising that so many of them go astray?

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

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## LETTER XLIX.

To Mr. H \* \* \*.

*Of true philosophy; and the advantages accruing to mankind from the study of it. The pernicious tenets of HOBBS, VANINI, &c. and the danger of trusting too much to our faculties.*

YORK, &amp;c.

S I R,

**S**INCE we have begun in these last ages, to understand and cultivate true philosophy; what great advantages has society receiv'd from it! we no longer see the learned submit to those prejudices, which were a scandal to human reason. Judicial astrology has fallen into the contempt it justly deserves. We must however own, there is nothing so improperly made use of, as the name of *Philosopher*. They give it to many people, who are unworthy of it; and how many others boldly assume it, without having the least title to it? He who spends his life in doing nothing, and he who labours hard in doing things that tend to nothing, equally stile themselves *Philosophers*; and have indeed both of them an equal title to the name: and he whose morals are scandalous,

scandalous, profanes this name by attributing it to himself.

Philosophy, which is commonly prais'd or blam'd by the world, without being known; is neither a severe Institution, that debars us from pleasures, nor a system of libertinism, that abandons us to all sorts of vice: on the contrary, 'tis the search after wisdom; and what is wisdom itself, but the knowledge of true happiness? That which makes a man happy, is the only good he should aim at; and his reason when enlighten'd, teaches him that good can only be found, in the fulfilling of his duty.

There is a philosophy, that has no less than the whole visible world, for its object, and which but few people can attain to; there is another still more advantageous to society, and which every body may arrive at: 'tis that which teaches a husband, how he should live with his wife; a father, how he should educate his children; a master, how he should behave to his servants: in short, 'tis that which makes a good parent, a good friend, a good subject, and in a word, a virtuous citizen. If this philosophy is as uncommonly, as it ought to be frequently met with in the world; let us candidly own, that 'tis to the shame of human nature.

How commendable are you, sir, who make it your only employ, to correct the errors of mankind, and teach them true wisdom! Con-

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separating poetry to philosophy; is bringing it back to its original, and restoring it to its ancient lustre. Poets were the first preceptors of mankind. I can't say which I most admire in you; your fine talents, or the wise use you make of them; your *poem on happiness*, is a proof of both. In this country, the country of philosophers; 'tis difficult to find them at your age: you are born with that happy genius, which at one and the same time, produces both the flowers of the spring, and fruits of the autumn.

The philosopher that dogmatizes, hurried on by a chain of consequences, is not always sensible of the dryness of his logick; the poet, that is carried away by the fire of his genius, is not accurate enough in his reasoning: and yet poetry itself can't move us, if 'tis void of regularity. On the other hand, 'tis not enough to prove, we must also be convinced. But how few men are there, who join the graces of the imagination, with justness of ideas!

If the English neglect gracefulness too much, both in their writings and discourses; they at least affect that good sense in every thing, for which they are so remarkable. The French often jest instead of reasoning; they sport with every thing, and substitute banter to erudition. Those who are so little upon their guard, in their discourse; don't reflect, that though a man is allow'd to be ignorant of many things,  
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he is never allow'd to talk of those, he is ignorant of. The English are not so guilty of this fault; but then they have another, equally disagreeable in company: they don't converse, they discourse. Politics, which they are continually employ'd in, accustoms them to a sort of reasoning, which becomes disagreeable, in familiar conversation. Besides, those that reason most, are not oftenest in the right. An inclination to disputing, shews more vanity than wisdom; more fondness for ones own opinion, than love for truth. This fault in many English, may be only the effects of their education; most of which are educated in such a manner, as makes them fitter for a university, than the world. And for this reason, 'tis only in England, that one finds pedants, even at court.

Great advantages result from the liberty they enjoy in this country, of speaking and writing whatever they think. By this free communication of their thoughts, they mutually instruct each other; and the understanding becomes more elevated. Emulation gives it wings, which make it take a happy flight. With these, VERULAM\* soar'd into the highest regions of metaphysics; there, his penetrating eyes, spied at least, what others have since more fully discovered. His successors, NEWTON and LOCKE, have only made such a progress in phi-

\* Lord Chancellor BACON.

philosophy, by following the paths he trac'd out for them. But this liberty has also its inconveniences; they abuse it, because men abuse every thing. THEOPHRASTUS said, that human knowledge, with the help of the senses, might judge of things, to a certain point; but when arriv'd at first causes, must stop there; either on account of their extreme difficulty, or its own insufficiency. Our modern philosophers have been too confident. Several of BACON's disciples have lost themselves; some by leaving the paths, he had clear'd for them, and others by daring to penetrate into the abysses, which had stopp'd that great philosopher. COLLINS, TINDAL, and the earl of SHAFTESBURY himself, by endeavouring to go beyond the bounds of human knowledge, lost themselves.

Thus in all times, men of the brightest understandings, have run into the greatest errors, under pretence of shaking off the prejudices of the age they liv'd in. Don't let us with the vulgar, admire the cynic in his tub; who endeavour'd to acquire the reputation of a wise man, by breaking through all the laws of modesty and decency. The rags, he affected to cover himself with, were the livery of his pride; and his pretended wisdom, more ridiculous, than all the follies he arrogantly censur'd. When washing his cabbage, and seeing ARISTIPPUS pass by, he said  
to

to him; *If you could live upon cabbage, you would not make your court to a tyrant: (DENNIS) ARISTIPPUS very justly answer'd him, If you could live amongst men, you would not wash cabbage.*

Where does not human reason stray to! Doubt is the only road, that leads us to the light of truth; but if we don't walk very cautiously in it, we run the risk of falling into the darkness of Pyrrhonism. Is it not surprising, that men should endeavour to acquire the esteem of the public, by striving to break the most sacred band of all societies; in declaring their opinion to others; that there was neither virtue nor vice; truth, nor doubt? Though people, who affect to doubt of every thing, are incapable of demonstrating any thing; their maxims, nevertheless, are of the most pernicious consequence to morality: and the scandalous authors, who have the rashness to publish them; ought to be punished by the laws, whose foundations they sap. Like those who poison the source of a river, they corrupt the principle of all our passions. Mankind, according to them, are only govern'd by force, or prejudice. There's an end of our country, our families, and our duty! What monstrous tenets! Let us not envy our neighbours a liberty, that does not permit the restraining such excesses. A people should have enough of it, to know the basis of their duty; but not enough

nough to destroy it. The generality of mankind, from the weakness of their intellects, are expos'd to be misled; they swallow poison, without knowing it. 'Tis the duty of those, who have the care of the laws, to prevent its being spread about; they ought to be as watchful for the maintenance of the good morals of a state, as for the preservation of the lives and fortunes of those that compose it. PARKER, an English bishop, in a tract that was publish'd in 1678, against Atheists, who teach their principles; mentioning among others, VANINI and HOBBS, would have those people, who subvert all the duties of life, and teach men to confound virtue with vice, treated like public pests.

I know that a man, who thinks, is, with regard to one, who does not think; what a man who sees clearly, is, compar'd to a blind man. What is thinking? 'Tis seeing. LOCK says, that knowledge is as grateful to the understanding, as light to the eyes. But in metaphysics, as well as natural philosophy; there are precautions which the defects of our organs make necessary, to prevent the inconveniences our curiosity might expose us to. On the one hand; there are some weak sights, that are fatigu'd by too much attention; and the result of all endeavours to fix them, is only trouble and confusion. On the other; there are some objects which blind those, who are obstinately determin'd to gaze on them.

386 LETTERS on the English, &c.

That man, who does not know the strength, or reach of his fight, is most frequently deceiv'd by it. The great opinion we have of our knowledge, is one cause of our ignorance; and confidence in our strength, one spring of our imbecillity.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

*The End of the first Volume.*



ERRATA.

PAGE 101. l. 9. for governor, read government; p. 108. l. 4. for from, r. them; p. 119. l. 28. add as; p. 185. l. 25. add who; p. 187. l. 31. for Δαίον τι, r. Οὐδὲν τι; p. 198. l. 16. dele to; p. 281. l. 32. for to, r. in; p. 289. l. 6. for Romans, r. Normans; p. 334. l. 3. dele so; p. 357. l. 4. for you, r. yoke.

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